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A BOOK ABOUT THE TABLE.

VOL. I.

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A BOOK ABOUT THE TABLE.

BY

JOHN CORDY JEAFFRESON,
=

A U T H O R O F

"A BOOK ABOUT DOCTORS," "A BOOK ABOUT LAWYERS,"
"A BOOK ABOUT THE CLERGY."

&c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL I.

Second Edition.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET,
1875.

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London : Printed by A. Schulze, 13, Poland Street.

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A BOOK ABOUT THE TABLE.

CHAPTER I.

GRACE AT MEALS.

"The custom of saying grace at meals had, probably, its origin in the early times of the world, and the hunter-state of man, when dinners were precarious things, and a full meal was something more than a common blessing; when a belly-full was a windfall, and looked like a special providence. In the shouts and triumphant songs with which, after a season of sharp abstinence, a lucky booty of deer's or goat's flesh would naturally be ushered home, existed, perhaps, the germ of the modern grace."—*Vide ELIA's ESSAY ON "GRACE BEFORE MEAT."*

HAD the late Sir Robert Peel been induced to make a speech on thanksgivings before and after meat, he would not have failed to observe that the subject divided itself under three heads. Having declared his approval of the pious usage which in every Christian household daily renders thanks for daily bread to the Bestower of it, he would have spoken of the occasions for such gratitude, of the forms which most aptly express the proper sentiment, and of the persons by whom those forms should be uttered. The

statesman's favourite mode of discussing topics shall be adopted in this opening chapter of a work which, like its precursors in a series of anecdotal histories, attempts to illustrate a portion of the domestic life of our forefathers.

Though his fine humour caused him to write lightly of festal thanksgivings, Charles Lamb's good sense forbade him to denounce the practice which, with considerations greatly impressive to ordinary men, reminds us at least once a day of our dependence on the divine bounty. "Theoretically" the essayist was no "enemy to graces;" but he had winced under the embarrassments that are apt to arise from their unseasonable or indiscreet performance. He had been stirred to ridicule or indignation by incongruities that are always apparent when men, acutely and ostentatiously eager for sensual enjoyment, thank God in nicely chosen terms for His goodness in affording them the opportunity and means for gluttonous excess. He even thought that the usage, which he hesitated to condemn, assigned too much importance to carnal satisfaction, and might be advantageously replaced by a practice that would select the higher pleasures for occasions of special thanksgiving. To prosperous men, secure of daily luxuries as well as daily bread, a good dinner, the cheapest of all the material

comforts daily lavished upon them by fortune, was too mean a thing for extraordinary gratitude.

There were a score of felicities which Elia thought more worthy of exceptional recognition than the delights of eating and drinking. The pleasant walk and friendly meeting were as fruitful of gladness as the juicy steak or plate of fat, tender oysters. Elia wanted thanksgivings for spiritual repasts, a grace before Shakespeare, another for utterance before a reading of Milton, a third in acknowledgment of the joy caused by a perusal of the "Fairy Queen." Had he delighted in the opera as much as the "legitimate drama," he would have suggested that concerts of purely secular music should open with devotional exercise.

It needs no unusual sagacity and power of reasoning to dispose of the humourist's objections to a practice which is chiefly commendable because it fosters in mankind a universal habit of gratitude to the one Giver of all blessings. The enjoyments which Elia preferred to the vulgar pleasures of the table are exceptional. Under any circumstances they must be of irregular recurrence, and concern only a few of the human race. Not one man in a thousand derives vivid gratification from literature; and it is not often that we, who

are readers, come upon a new book the excellences of which dispose the most thankful and devout of us to say grace for its publication. Nor do we care to read Shakespeare and Milton every day of our lives. Music will never be a universal delight; and the average toiler of East London will experience no sensible diminution of happiness when Sir Richard Wallace moves his artistic treasures from Bethnal Green to private galleries. The higher enjoyments are for the higher natures. But men of lofty soul and subtlest powers resemble folk of inferior quality in needing and relishing daily bread.

The pleasure is not more universal than the necessity of eating. Men may live to eat. They must eat to live. This fact is obvious alike to the prig who thinks it unphilosophic, and to the ascetic who deems it sinful, to enjoy a good dinner. Food is the foundation of all human felicity. Though its immediate pleasures are inferior to several enjoyments, it is the root of all mundane blessings. With it, all the finer joys are, under favourable conditions, attainable. Without it, all enjoyment ceases. Elia, deprived of food, would soon have lost all

“moonlight
atings,” all
he relished
new forms

of grace, was due to those grosser aliments for which he was half-ashamed to say "Thank God." Though deep enough for the humourist's purposes his view of the whole question was superficial. Nor can much be said for the historical suggestion at the opening of his paper. It is far more probable that the custom of saying grace at meals originated in an intelligent recognition of the universal importance of food, as the foundation and source of earthly well-being, than that it had its birth in the clamorous exultation of tribes of savages hastening to satisfy their wolfish hunger with long-desired flesh of deer and goats. Charles Lamb, usually so wise with his wit and drollery, was guilty of nonsense when, after stating his theory of the origin of graces, he wrote gravely, "It is not otherwise easy to be understood why the blessing of food—the act of eating—should have had a particular expression of thanksgiving annexed to it, distinct from that implied and silent gratitude with which we are expected to enter upon the enjoyment of the many other various and good things of existence."

No doubt, the sense of thankfulness for blessings is weakened in some natures—perhaps in the majority of common natures—by the sense of secure possession. We are all too prone to regard as matters of course, and therefore as no affairs

for special gratitude, the comforts which come to us regularly, without forethought, or toil, or anxiety on our part. The greater the need for gracious forms to remind us that the familiar bounties are great bounties. And what though the prosperous, secure of their six courses and dessert after the daily ringing of the dinner-bell, are incapable of such gratitude for a good meal as is felt by men whose means of living are precarious? How can the exceptional lot of these favourites of fortune discredit the universal practice, which was instituted for the edification of the many who live on herbs, as well as of the few who do their pleasure with stalled oxen?

The rich men, at whose tables Elia sometimes sat a *rarus hospes*, could be counted by tens, whilst their poor neighbours, to each of whom a savoury dinner was a windfall, numbered thousands. And who holds his prosperity by so sure a tenure that no enemy can wrest it from him? The very conditions of civilized life, which, under ordinary circumstances, give us the advantage over savages, may become instruments for reducing us to famine. The Prussians march on Paris; and ere six months have passed, the besieged multitude grow lean and gaunt from hunger, and luxurious epicures, to whom hippophagy had been a mere jest or curious subject of speculation, are glad to fill themselves with

sawdust and vermin. Moreover, grace for meat is not limited to the material "creatures" of the abundant board, which in seasons of peace and plenty are easily attainable. It covers the power to enjoy, as well as the substantial means of enjoyment.. There is no feast to be thankful for in the absence of desire for food, or if good digestion fails to wait on appetite. And who can say how long he may retain the physical conditions, which are no less needful than sufficient dishes, for the enjoyment of our daily bread ? Regarded as the chief and type of all material comforts, food will continue to be the subject and occasion for universal thankfulness. Wits may be smart against the grateful usage, but simple men will not depart from their old way at the order of flippancy. And even though the custom of saying them audibly should pass from us, grace at meals will rise silently from thankful hearts.

Unanimous in their gratitude for meat, our people differ in opinion as to the occasions for expressing it. Some think it enough to be audibly thankful for dinner, and acknowledge the blessing of breakfast silently. Others are vocally grateful for every meal to which they "sit down." Country folk are, upon the whole, more eloquent of thanks for daily bread than Londoners ; and in the country your most copious sayers of grace

must be sought amongst Nonconformists, or in serious coteries with a strong sympathy for dissent. I know of pleasant households amongst those sober kinds of rural folk, where "high tea" is preluded with offering of thanks as ceremoniously as dinner or supper. But the severest precision of my acquaintance will partake of such flying refreshment as "a glass of sherry and a biscuit" without a special entreaty that it may be blessed to his use. All the "sects" and "sets" concur in holding that mere "snacks" and "stirrup-cups" should be taken without formal thanks to the Great Giver. In our Catholic time, the Church prescribed grace before and after the two chief meals of the day, a rule which the popular sentiment of a later period commended in the adage,

"Grace for supper, and grace for dinner,
Or you'll justly be thought a graceless sinner."

At the modern dinner, which corresponds to the supper of our forefathers, one half of this order is observed even in the lightest circles of worldly society. But in many households that are not chargeable with irreverence, grace has fallen into disuse at lunch (the dinner of olden time), unless children are present at it, when, as the dinner of the youngsters, it becomes an occasion for utterance of thanks.

Of forms of grace it may be asserted that those are most acceptable to taste and judgment which are chiefly remarkable for brevity and simplicity of diction. A grace should only suggest the disposition appropriate to a receiver of benefits. Neither a homily nor a prayer, it should touch the note of thankfulness, and forbear to repeat it. Addressing the heart rather than the mind, it should not explain itself, or justify itself by argument. The church, the chapel, and the private closet are the proper scenes for fuller utterances of gratitude. In the dining-room it is enough to say, "Thanks to God for all his blessings."

Not much can be said in commendation of the wordy and elaborate Latin graces which have come to us from mediæval churchmen, and may still be heard in the halls of ancient colleges. They have a pleasant savour of antiquity. They remind the hearer of the scholastic pedantries that prevailed amongst the learned at the dates of their composition. To men, who learnt and chanted them in their boyhood, they may have agreeable associations and be fruitful of sweet memories; but for the purpose which their composers may be supposed to have had in view, they are ineffectual. Regarded as academic exercises or ecclesiastical offices, they may be meritorious; but they fail to stir the chords which a grace should touch lightly, and

only for a moment. Thanks should be cordial and spontaneous; whereas these antique arrangements of nicely considered praise, with their several parts for priest and respondents, are ostentatiously artificial. Save that they are shorter and more intelligible, the several graces in the vulgar tongue, which have descended to us from the Reformation Period, are in no way preferable to the academic thanksgivings. Sermons in miniature, some of them say too much. Others have a supplicatory character, and might be mistaken for collects rejected by the compilers of the Common Prayer. A few of them are really wonderful specimens of compressed thought; but all are more or less frigid, angular, and conventional—none are simple thanks.

Even more objectionable, for their artificiality and tediousness, are the musical graces which have in these later years become fashionable at public dinners. One seeks in vain for a reason why people, when they feast together in large numbers, should thank God for meat and drink by a process which none of them would think of using at a familiar board. Intelligible only to the musical, these operatic thanksgivings are positive inflictions to ordinary hearers; whilst they are little better than “fantastic” impertinences to the expert in melody when he is sincerely moved to gratitude

for an abundant meal. No composer or vocalist ever chants his thanks for a beef-steak pudding in his private parlour.

Rather than these harmonious performances, which put the words of praise out of hearing, I would have the silent grace of the Quakers and the military messes. No form at all is better than one which robs a pious practice of its sincerity and earnestness.

And who is the fittest person to utter the simple grace which should prelude every ceremonious repast? The question is no new one. "In houses," says Charles Lamb, "where the grace is as indispensable as the napkin, who has not seen that never settled question as to *who shall say it?* while the good man of the house and the visitor clergyman, or some other guest, belike of next authority from years or gravity, shall be bandying about the office between them as a matter of compliment, each not unwilling to shift the burden of an equivocal duty from his own shoulders."

In the days of our grandfathers, it was generally understood, that "respect for the cloth" required the lay host to assign the duty to the principal ecclesiastic at his table. In the absence of clergy, the entertainer might himself "ask the blessing." But for him to utter it in the presence of sacred clerk or minister, was to "pass over" the holy

man and commit an irreverence. Importuned for a grace, Elia's friend, C. V. L., used to say significantly "Thank God," when he had first inquired, "Is there no clergyman at table?"

This moribund, but not quite obsolete, fashion of asking the clergyman to say grace, had its origin in times when every important household had a clerical officer, and when the ceremonious graces of great tables were in a tongue that required a scholarly utterer. Composed in the religious houses, for use in monastic halls and collegiate refectories, the old Latin graces were carried from the cloisters to the castles, whose seigniors were too proud to thank the Almighty for His blessings, except by deputy. Thus introduced to secular life, the Latin graces passed from courts to the homes of courtiers, from the baron's board to the knight's table, and thence to the tables of inferior quality who delighted in copying the ways of their betters. Municipalities adopted the noble fashion ; and merchants, in their houses, were pleased to preface their ceremonious suppers with the graces spoken at the banquets of their guilds. In his common life, the London alderman was content to declare his thankfulness in his mother-tongue ; but when he invited his neighbours to feast with him, on his daughter's marriage or his son's coming of age, he invited his parish priest, or the chaplain of his

Company, in order that the banquet should be hallowed with grace of a grander and politer sort. The intervention of a priest was necessary for the proper rendering of some of the more elaborate Latin graces, with their parts for "Sacerdos" and their "responses."

The fashion, which thus arose in our Catholic time, was extended in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the successive ecclesiastical convulsions that increased the number of the clergy, who were glad to officiate as chaplains in private families. In times when every well-to-do squire entertained some ejected priest or minister, it was unusual for a gentle family to sit down to meat in the absence of a reverend personage, whose principal duties under his patron's roof were to read prayers daily in the hall, and say grace at table. Under these circumstances it concerned the dignity of every host, who affected gentility, that the thanks rendered at his board should be spoken by one of the cloth. Vanity joined hands with superstition; and a grand repast was deemed an imperfect affair if no clerk proclaimed its eaters' gratitude.

At the present time, there is a growing sentiment among our clergy that their cloth is more honoured by the breach than by the observance of this old-world fashion, which for the moment converts the

clergyman selected for the office into his host's domestic chaplain. Some of our ecclesiastics even refuse to support the falling custom, which appears to imply that the thanksgivings of laity are not completely acceptable to the Creator unless they come to Him through priestly lips. There are also social critics who urge that a clergyman is the one person who should not be invited to the office of grace-sayer. Graces, it is urged, besides being simple, should be uttered with simplicity. The clerical tone, or any kind of conventional seriousness, is fatal to their effect on earthly hearers. It robs them of the naturalness and air of spontaneity which should characterize such declarations. It emphasizes the formality of a form that ought to be as far as possible devoid of ceremony. And it must be admitted that not one clergyman in a hundred can say grace without reminding his hearers that he is a clergyman, and making them feel that they are a congregation assembled for religious admonition, rather than a company gathered together for social enjoyment.

Perhaps the simplest, and therefore most effective, utterers of graces at table are well-mannered children. No company can desire a better orator of their thanks to the Almighty than a pretty little girl, who, doing with matter of fact self-possession and winning gravity what she does daily for the

familiar good, puts her hands together meekly and speaks the grateful words. Small boys are seldom such felicitous performers of grace as their sisters. But sometimes they discharge the thankful duty with nice propriety. And there is good authority for recording that in olden time little fellows, with neatly combed locks, commonly officiated as grace-clerks at their parents' tables.

In his capital “booke of the good Nourture for children,” entitled “The Schoole of Vertue,” (A.D. 1557), Master Seager admonishes the youthful reader thus,

“ When thy parentes downe to the table shall syt,
 In place be ready for the purpose most fyt ;
 With sober countenance, lookynge them in the face,
 Thy hands holdynge up, thus begin grace :
 ‘ Geve thankes to God with one accorde
 For that shall be set on this borde,
 And be not careful what to eate,
 To eche thynge lyvynge the Lord sends meate ;
 For foode he wyll not se you peryshe,
 But wyll you fede, foster and cheryshe ;
 Take well in worth what he hath sent,
 At thys time be therwith content
 Praysyng God.’

So treatable spekyng, as possibly thou can,
 That the hearers thereof may thee understan.
 Grace beyng sayde, low cursie make thou,
 Sayinge ‘ much good may it do you.’ ”

Having followed up grace with this civil wish, the little man of Seager's “Schoole of Vertue” bestirred

himself in the duties of a gentle serving-page to the best of his ability, ministering to the comfort of others before he took his own share of the repast. If elders in olden time were served before their juniors, the youngsters were spared the annoyance of sitting listlessly with folded hands, and hungrily eyeing the savoury dishes which they might not touch. Their zeal and interest in their ministerial duties spared them the sharp discomforts of expectancy felt by children, who may only watch and sit still, till they get their portions.

In the absence of clergy and children, the choice of a grace-sayer lies between the host and the mistress of the house; for the quite obsolete fashion of imposing the duty on an important guest, out of compliment to his importance, was too snobbish and ridiculous for anyone to desire its revival. There are reasons why the host, as the bread-winner and human giver of the feast, might be thought the fittest person to offer thanks to the divine Giver. But if he has a wife, Amphitryon will usually do well to make her the orator. As speakers of graces, laymen are seldom more successful than clerks. They are usually sheepish or pompous. Your master of the house is rarely a good performer. If he does not hurry through the thanksgiving, as though he deemed it a piece of trifling, and were ashamed of his part in the puerile

transaction, he becomes a burlesque of solemnity and opens the feast as though he were burying a friend. It is otherwise with his wife. Her voice cannot be unmusical; and womanly taste and instinct enable her to hit the proper vocal note between colloquial lightness and religious severity. Moreover, the duty becomes her place. Thanks for daily bread are fitly offered by her whose distinctive title proclaims her the distributor of it.

My experience of graces discredits the cynical sentiment that gratitude is thankfulness for favours to come. Thanks after meat are usually far more emphatic and cordial than graces before it. Hunger is an enemy to pious emotion. The ravenous Christian is too much occupied with sharp desire and painful craving, to have a devout regard for the mercies he is only on the point of receiving. But full of wine and venison, the satisfied feaster speaks from the plenitude of a grateful heart. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the tone and words of the later grace are sometimes expressive of disappointment and critical censure. Everyone remembers the story of the clerical humourist, who, on being pressed to say an after-dinner grace at a table where he had been too frequently regaled with rabbits, observed significantly :—

“Of rabbits young and rabbits old,
Of rabbits hot and rabbits cold,
Of rabbits tender and rabbits tough,
Thank the Lord, *I have had enough!*”

The memory, also, comes to me of Dr. Clement, courtliest and kindest of physicians, who had a series of after-dinner graces that nicely expressed the degrees of his thankfulness. When he had partaken of a faultless repast, he would reward Mrs. Clement with a radiant smile, and then turning his eyes upwards, say emphatically, “Thank God for an *excellent* dinner.” A dinner of merit, though of inferior excellence, was acknowledged devoutly with, “Thank God for a *good* dinner.” An ordinary regalement, that would justify neither special praise nor positive reproof, elicited no heartier grace than, “Well! I am thankful for my dinner.” But when the repast had consisted of cold meats, and unpalatable reproductions of yesterday’s fare, the worthy man used to pray in a plaintively lugubrious tone of grievance, as though he were protesting against ill-usage, and imploring an impossibility. “May the Lord make me thankful for *what I have received!*” On hearing this dolorous entreaty, Mrs. Clement seldom failed to deliver some equally appropriate and edifying remarks on the sin of daintiness. But to her honour, it must be recorded, that the offensive hint was not

thrown away upon her. To the last the doctor's graces were instructions to his wife, as well as thanks to Heaven.

On festal days, in some of our civic and collegiate halls, after-dinner grace is attended with usages, alike ancient and courteous. One of them is the passing round of "poculum caritatis," or "loving cup," whose scarcely palatable contents will be mentioned in a later section of this work.

Much, also, might be said about obsolete or almost disused forms of thanksgiving of meat, one of the strangest of which is the grace still acted, instead of spoken, at the terminal dinners at Clifford's Inn. After the banquets of that learned society, members and guests rise, on the removal of the white cloth, and witness the following thanksgiving in pantomime. Before the president of the second table the butler puts a mass of bread, consisting of four loaves, adhering to each other by their kissing crusts. Taking this mass of bread in his right hand, the said president of the second table slowly raises it above his head to the full reach of his arm, and after a few moments' pause brings it down with a thunderous whack on the oaken table. A second time the bread is elevated, and struck upon the resounding board. Yet a third time the feat is performed; and then, before strangers have had time to recover from

their astonishment, the grace-actor has thrown the bread so that it slides and spins down to the bottom of the long table, where it is caught up by the butler, who instantly runs out of the dining-hall with it in his outstretched hands. The whole grace is typical. The four loaves represent the four Gospels; the three elevations are in reverence of the three persons of the Sacred Trinity; the manner in which the bread is cast down the table, indicates the liberality with which the Bread of Life was given to mankind; the alacrity with which the butler runs out of the hall exemplifies the alacrity with which zealous servants hasten to distribute the bread of spiritual knowledge to those who hunger for it. The date of this singular grace is unknown; but it is certainly of ancient origin, and no one can question that it sprung from devout sentiment. It teaches that, whilst grateful for the bread which only sustains perishable existence, men should be far more thankful for the bread which affords eternal Life.

CHAPTER II.

BRITONS AT TABLE.

"The Aborigines of Britain, to come nearer home, could have no great expertness in cookery, as they had no oil, and we hear nothing of their butter. They used only sheep and oxen, eating neither hares, though greatly esteemed at Rome, nor hens, nor geese, from a notion of superstition. Nor did they eat fish. There was little corn even in the interior part of the island; but they lived chiefly on milk and flesh."—*Vide Rev. SAMUEL PEGGE's INTRODUCTION TO "THE FORME OF CURY."*

"L'univers n'est rien que par la vie, et tout ce qui vit se nourrit.—Les animaux se repaissent, l'homme mange; l'homme d'esprit seul sait manger.—La destinée des nations dépend de la manière dont elles se nourrissent.—Le Créateur, en obligeant l'homme à manger pour vivre, l'y invite par l'appétit, et l'en récompense par le plaisir."—*BRILLAT-SAVARIN'S "APHORISMS."*

IN the last century before the Christian era, an important suggestion respecting the origin of cookery was made by Posidonius of Rhodes, who was so perfect a stoic that, whilst experiencing the sharpest pangs of gout, he could converse cheerfully with Pompey on the agreeable excitements of pain, and declare that his bodily disturbance could not be justly termed a malady, as it was no evil.

To this philosopher, who could enjoy a tooth-ache and think sciatica a blessing, it occurred that cooking of the simplest kind was a mere imitation

of natural processes, and that, in respect to his culinary needs, every man might "paddle his own canoe." Any man provided with a good set of teeth, glands for the secretion of saliva, a tongue, and the usual apparatus for digestion, could prepare his own bread by merely consuming the grain of which bread might be made in a more troublesome fashion. His teeth could do the work of a mill; with the help of a natural secretion, his tongue could knead the materials which the teeth had ground; muscular action might be trusted to put the dough into an oven—the bread-maker's stomach—where it would be properly prepared for the nutrition of the body. All that a professional cook could do in the matter was to copy the operations of the bodily machine. Under certain circumstances the copyist might lighten the body's labour, but he could never do away with the need of it. Every man, in fact, was supplied with an excellent cooking apparatus, and should be his own cook.

Fortunately for the readers of this work, it is not necessary that they should trace the culinary art through every stage of its development, from the time when man took his first step to gastronomic proficiency from a consideration of the body's way of dealing with uncooked corn. But they should reflect on the historic certainty that eating pre-

ceded cookery, which art must be regarded as the invention of luxury rather than necessity. And having thus glanced at the dismal period which preceded the earliest practices of the kitchen, they should consider for a few minutes the culinary barbarism of our rather remote and very "rude forefathers."

"Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es," "Tell me what thou eatest and I will tell thee what thou art," said Brillat-Savarin, pointing to a grand truth. Just as the man who drinks beer inordinately, thinks it, the gross feeder is sure to be a heavy thinker. The man who lives on beef-steaks may be robust, but he is not likely to have nice instincts or a subtle mind. There are limits, however, to the applicability of every maxim, and conditions under which the wisest rules will mislead its inconsiderate followers. Mention could be made of gastronomic eccentricities from which the epicurean Frenchman would have drawn wrong inferences, in spite of his sagacity and fine knowledge of human nature. Dryden delighted in the huge masses of almost raw meat that gave him restless nights and a wakeful muse. Lord Eldon's teeth and eyes never failed to water from delight when his nostrils caught the smell of fried pig's liver and bacon. George the First's* liveliest gust was for

* "Heliogobalus and George I. had this in common, that they

putrid oysters. Had M. Brillat-Savarin rashly estimated those three feeders from their favourite refreshments he would have called the first a prize-fighter, the second a ploughman, and the third a beast. In which case he would have been quite wrong with respect to the poet and the peer, and not altogether right regarding the king.

Judged from the gastronomic point of view, it must be confessed that our British ancestors, at the time of the Roman conquest, were persons for whom we have cause to blush. Whatever his pride of descent, there is a point in his pedigree where every man finds it well to relinquish curiosity about his lineal forefathers. It is never prudent for the chief of a noble house to seek for the story of its founder's grandfather. For myself, if I could trace my familiar stock to a gentle Briton of the Roman period, I would rest content and ask no questions about his grandfather of pre-Roman time. Even a Welshman would be slow to boast himself the direct representative of a chieftain who was at best a pious cannibal, with a quick eye for tit-bits at a Druidical banquet.

both liked fish a trifle stale. Thus, it is known that George never cared for oysters till their shells began spontaneously to gape ; and the Oriental master of the Roman Empire, who made a barber prefect of his provisions, except at a great distance from the sea, when they acquired the taint he loved."—*Vide DORAN'S "TABLE TRAITS WITH SOMETHING ON THEM."* (Second Edition). 1854.

When history first condescended to notice our British forefathers, their cooking was of Posidonian simplicity. Indeed, it is questionable whether their culinary practice covered all the operations noticed by the stoical observer. Diodorus Siculus, an authority on many matters at this date, albeit an arrant and ludicrously inaccurate book-maker, something less than two thousand years since, assures us that they lived chiefly on dried corn, which they brayed in mortars, and worked into a heavy paste. The mightiest chieftain of them all had never a morsel of butter wherewith to lubricate this farinaceous mess. When corn failed these eaters of paste, hunger gave them appetite for acorns—the food of swine, and so bitter a substitute for meat, that the men of these luxurious days can scarcely believe it to have ever been a common article of diet. It is less generally known, that the same nauseous fare was consumed in seasons of scarcity by our ancestors of much more recent time. But William Harrison,* supremely first of Elizabethan chroniclers, assures us that, even in his day, the poorer folk of England sometimes ate a bread made partly or altogether of acorns.

* "The bread," he says in his Introduction to Holinshed's *Chronicles*, "throughout the lande is made of such graine as the soile yealdeth, neverthelesse the gentilitie commonlie provide themselves sufficientlie of wheat for their own tables, whilst their household and poor neighbours in some shires are inforced to content

There were hard times, when, in the dearth of mast, the aborigines of our productive land devoured herbs and roots, even more distasteful and indigestible than the fruit of the oak. But they had palliatives for the torments of famine. Harrison records that in the Northern districts they possessed a "certaine kind of confection," made, probably, of earth and the inspissated juices of narcotic herbs, a small pill of which alleviated wonderfully the pain of fasting. Another of their measures against hunger is more singular and incredible. In the extremity of their anguish, the famished wretches had recourse to a primitive kind of water-cure. Creeping out to the fens and morasses, they placed themselves in "moorish plots up unto their chins," themselves with rie or barlie, yea, and in time of dearth, manie with bread made either of beans, peason or otes, or of altogether or some acorns among, of which scourge the poorest doo soonest taste, sith they are least able to provide themselves of better. I will not saie that this extremitie is oft so well to be seene in time of plentie as of dearth, but if I should, I could easily beare my triall. For albeit there be much ground now eared in euerie place, than hath beene of late yeares, yet such a price of corne continueth in each towne and market withoutt anie just cause (except it be that landlords doo get licenses to carie corne out of the lande onelie to keepe up the prices for their owne private gaines and ruine of the commonwealth), that the artificer and poore labouring man is not able to reach unto it; but is driven to content himself with horse-corne, I mean beanies, peason, otes, tares, and lintels, and therefore it is a true proverbe, that 'hunger setteth his foot in the horse-manger.'"
—*Vide WILLIAM HARRISON's "INTRODUCTION."*

and sat for hours at a time in mud and water. They were of opinion that the cold and wet “qualified the heats of their stomachs,” and weakened their yearning for food. Strange to say, the efficacy of this process has not been fully tested in these days of scientific inquiry. But any reader of this work who is prone to be irritable when his wife keeps him waiting for dinner, may easily make trial of the frigid treatment. Instead of venting his displeasure at an absent wife in angry words, let him retire to his bath-room, turn on the cold water, and sit in it till she has returned from her afternoon’s drive. He will, of course, select for the experiment a day in the sharpest season of winter.

It may not, however, be inferred from the Sicilian’s inadequate account of early British fare, that the Britons were vegetarians. We have a better authority on the subject in Julius Cæsar, who studied the barbarous islanders whilst he was subjugating them, and who put it on record that they were habitual consumers of flesh and milk. Superstition forbade them to eat the goose, the hare, and the chicken, and they were strangely neglectful of the fishes that abounded in their rivers. But they were eaters of meat. Though the savour of a perfectly roasted sirloin of beef may have never delighted their nerves of taste and smell, they devoured on gaudy days huge lumps

of badly broiled flesh. On especial occasions, also, they were partakers of those bloody and repulsive banquets, to which I have already alluded, with a flippancy that will be sternly reprobated by censors, whose treatment of serious subjects is always in the best taste.

But though the early British chieftain's table may, under ordinary circumstances, have possessed the materials for gross gluttony, no words can palliate its shortcomings. At the best it was graceless, comfortless, and savage. It had neither a code of etiquette, nor a soup, nor any sauce but hunger. It is believed to have been altogether without the means of intoxication.

The Roman occupation was beneficent to the conquered people in culinary matters. Together with his munitions and rules of war, the conqueror brought his science and implements of cookery. Provided with various stew-pans and half-a-score of piquant zest, he used them as means of government no less than as instruments of selfish gratification. Cooks completed the work which the triumphant legions had only begun. The latter had only crushed and terrified a turbulent people—the former afforded timely consolation to the fallen race, and, by giving them a new field of enjoyment, inspired them with self-respect and hope. Cookery and civilization are not purchased too dearly by

barbarians who acquire them by the sacrifice of a more or less imaginary independence. The more intelligent of the Britons thought so, as they sniffed the steaming pottages, and sipped the wines of their victors. Physical force gave culinary art the requisite time for the exercise of its influence; but the captains would have failed if the chefs had not been equal to the occasion. Cookery reconciled the islanders to the presence and sway of the foreigner. No doubt, the older and less adaptive of the aborigines scorned the allurements of Roman kitchens, and, holding to their old notions respecting unclean and sacred meats, disdained to dip their fingers in a bowl of cocky-leekie. But the younger islanders, surrendering themselves to savoury fascinations, learnt to bless the conqueror who taught them to appreciate the oyster, to stew the goose, to jug the hare, and cook the pullet in half a hundred ways. Having accepted the foreigner's government on compulsion, they took his sauces from preference, and his ragouts from gastronomic affection.

The German immigrants who settled in Britain during the Roman occupation, were also alive to the merits of the cookery practised by the rulers and superior aborigines of their adopted land. Caring chiefly for the quantity, they were not indifferent to the quality of their viands. That they

delighted in rich soups is indicated by the Saxon name which, from the time of Alfred to that of Henry the Seventh, designated a variety of thick stews, and is still preserved in the terms of culinary art. Broth and bread are Saxon words; the former of the two words was part of the verb “*briwan*, to cook,” whence also came “*brewing*,” the process of making malt liquor, and “*brewets*,” the popular name in mediæval England for highly seasoned hotch-potches of stewed meat, thickened with meal. In “*steak*” and “*steam*” we have two other philological indications of the care expended by the Saxons on gastronomic art. We should not be justified in crediting them with the re-invention, or even with the introduction of malt liquor, a drink known to the ancient Egyptians. On acquiring a taste for alcohol from the Romans, the Britons learnt from the same teachers how to prepare wine from corn. But it is to the honour of the Saxons, that at a happy moment of genial inspiration they gave malt-brewet the expressive title of “*ale*”—the cheerful giver of warmth.

Though its name is of Greek extraction, butter is an article of food that was probably brought to this country by the Teuton immigrants. “*Churn*” is a Saxon term. The Romans were connoisseurs of “*cheese*;” but with their southern taste for oil, as the proper instrument of culinary lubrication,

they disdained to use at their tables the greasy substance whose chief title to their respect was its efficacy, when employed as a medicinal unguent. Indeed, butter was a thing of curiosity rather than of service to the ancients of Greece and Rome. Its use, for any dietetic purpose, was confined to a few of the old peoples. The Israelites were no consumers of the oily mass. This is one of the points on which Biblical commentators have ceased to differ. The “chamea,” offered to the vanquished Sisera on a “lordly dish” by the most treacherous murderer of all history, was a preparation of thick milk. It was a fluid that, to a poetic imagination, might have run down in streams. It certainly was no such product as farmers’ wives were wont to sell by the pint in Suffolk, and by the yard in Cambridgeshire. The Greeks derived their knowledge of badly made butter from the Thracians, the Phrygians, and the Scythians. The same knowledge came to the Romans from Germany, to whose barbarous tribes Pliny attributes the invention of the process for collecting the oily particles from milk.

In proportion as his climate is colder, man requires for his comfort and support a larger supply of heat-producing aliment. The pie-men of St. Petersburg pour train-oil on their pies, to the satisfaction of their customers. Sir John Franklin, to

his surprise and alarm, saw an Esquimaux youth consume fourteen pounds of tallow candles at a single sitting; and the young gentleman was desirous of continuing the feast, when Sir John, who had offered to give him as many candles as he could eat, bought him off with the present of a large lump of fat pork. Possessing the butyric art, it is reasonable to suppose that the Northern Germans, living in a rigorous atmosphere, were great consumers of butter. They may also be credited with introducing to this country the preparation which was unknown to the Britons of the pre-Roman period. One can believe that a wholesomely superstitious dame of the Saxon race was the originator of the pious maxim, "Don't swear, or the butter won't come." To the same source, also, may be referred the adage, preserved in Thomas Cogan's "Haven of Health" (1596), "Butter is gold in the morning, silver at noon, and lead at night."

The withdrawal of the Romans was a serious blow to gastronomy in Britain; but it would be a mistake to suppose that their culinary practice disappeared with their arms. Cookery is an art whose lessons are not speedily forgotten. Conservative in all that pertains to social usages, man is especially so in matters of the table. It is, therefore, impossible that the superior aborigines, who had been slowly, and at first reluctantly, weaned from the gross

tastes of their forefathers, would immediately lapse into culinary barbarism on the disappearance of the benefactors whose arts and garb they had adopted. Nor were the Germans neglectful of the precepts of the Roman epicures. Power is the nurse of luxury; and with their growing influence the Saxons doubtless exhibited a finer taste in eating.

It has been too much the fashion with writers to deride the meanness and coarseness of Saxon fare. In his sweet bread and bright butter, the Thane had two important requisites for a good table. Though inferior to fermented juices of the grape, his daily liquor was no contemptible drink. The potage was always present when his board was spread. Rome had taught him how to treat deer and small game, the flesh of swine and oxen, and the meat of wild-fowl. Fish was one of his favourite foods, and he cooked eggs in divers fashions.

In the absence of garum, he was not without some meritorious sauces and relishes. Nor was his table wanting in other evidences of refinement. Saxon art has transmitted to us proofs that the later Saxons covered their tables with linen cloths, used napkins, and were served ceremoniously by kneeling ministrants. I am disposed to think that, on their arrival in this country, the *luxurious* Normans, as

they are always termed in popular history, brought with them few kitchen luxuries that were not familiar to the vanquished chieftains.

On the other hand, due allowance must be made for the natural propensities of a robust and phlegmatic people, who were certainly less disposed to daintiness than to gluttony. Often immoderate, the Saxons were seldom fastidious eaters. In drinking, they cared little for flavour, provided they could achieve their principal objects—the excitement and stupefaction of drunkenness.

In these respects, the Danes resembled the Saxons. Rivalling them in gluttony, they appear to have surpassed them in toping. To the Danes, our ancestors are indebted for those of their old drinking usages, that are most strongly significant of intemperance. The representative men of the two stocks are remembered for their excesses in feasting, as well as for their policies. The virtuous Alfred did not practise moderation in diet, until he had paid a heavy penalty for gross indulgence. Canute the Hardy prided himself on his ostentatious and incessant hospitalities, and on adding two meals to the daily regalements of his aristocracy. It is noteworthy that each of these kings suffered severely from bridal feasting. Alfred the Great injured his constitution irreparably, by swinish excess at his own wedding. Something more than

a hundred and seventy years later, Canute the Hardy drank himself to death at a marriage banquet. So perished the Dane, of whom history records, "He covered four times a day the tables, at which all who came to them were welcome guests."

CHAPTER III.

'ANTIQUE FEASTING.

"Old Lucullus, they say,
 Forty cooks had each day,
 And Vitellius's meals cost a million ;
 But I like what is good
 When or where be my food,
 In a chop-house or royal pavilion.

"At all feasts (if enough)
 I most heartily stuff,
 And a song at my heart alike rushes,
 Though I've not fed my lungs
 Upon nightingales' tongues,
 Nor the brains of goldfinches and thrushes."

CAPTAIN MORRIS'S "SONGS."

WHEN it perished, after a long decay, the Roman Empire bequeathed two precious legacies to mankind—its laws and its cookery. The societies that reformed themselves on Theodosian principles, on emerging from the disorder and violence of universal anarchy, followed the culinary precepts which Rome had taught and illustrated in her period of highest luxury. Social convulsions had never caused a general neglect of those rules. To suppose that the Apician code fell out of sight and practice during the struggles

which preceded and followed the empire's dissolution, is to surpass in imaginative error the historians who long maintained that the mediæval civilians were indebted for their system to the accidental discovery of a copy of Justinian's pandects.

Political agitations lessen neither the appetite nor the need for food. The people of a falling State must have their pottage. Public calamity may occupy the mind, but it cannot satisfy the belly. War and flight only sharpen the desire for meat and drink. The fasting soldier cannot fight; the hungry fugitive falls behind his comrades. It is the same with private sorrow. The death of a virtuous citizen is an occasion for offering a funeral banquet to his mourners.* Whilst Rome lay gasping on her death-bed, spits turned before her kitchen-fires. When she was dead, and her heirs were struggling desperately for one or another of the dissevered portions of her estate, the spits went on turning, and her cooks, the slaves of precedent, prepared their sauces, and seasoned their dishes, by the rules of Apicius, even as our English cooks followed the directions of Mrs. Glasse and Mrs. Rundell on the eve of the battle of Waterloo, and as they would obey the orders of Acton and Ude, if the Germans were marching on London, or Mr. Odger were First President of the British Republic.

* I've often heard that in grief
Eating is a great relief. Hwd.

Religion passes from east to west; cookery northwards from the south. Our earliest dinners were brought us by the legions of Cæsar. And from that dawn of gastronomic science on our island, whenever cookery has languished amongst us, she has looked to the South for new ideas and another inspiration. It was so at the decay of feudalism, at the Caroline restoration, and at the beginning of the present century. The influence of ancient Rome may still be recognized in our soups and entrées, our sausages and salads. Lobster rissoles were invented and brought to perfection by Heliogabalus.

But though we owe a vast debt of gratitude to Rome for her culinary benefactions, we need not shut our eyes to the imperfections and barbaric grossness of her cuisine. If it was a great thing for our remote forefathers to have acquired her system, it was even more fortunate that our nearer ancestors had the intelligence and courage to liberate themselves from its thraldom.

The discomforts and gastronomic outrages of an Augustan supper are so notorious, that no epicure of modern London would care to accept an invitation to a feast served after the manner of the ancients. Even though he had perfect confidence in the Amphitryon's scholarly competence for a

difficult enterprise, he would avoid an entertainment more likely to ruffle his temper, and offend his palate, than to cheer his spirits and gratify his taste. Bearing in mind the requirements of the triclinium he would shrink from a position, fruitful of humiliations and perplexities, which may be realized with sufficient accuracy by any gentleman of an inquiring turn, who will do his best to enjoy a long repast of soups and hashes whilst he lies on a sofa, and wears a dressing-gown of ample folds. Under the most favourable circumstances, a Roman dinner must have been a sloppy affair, even to nicely circumspect feeders. Consumed hastily, in an hour of vexatious and untoward incidents, it must have been less advantageous to the eater than to his tailor. It is creditable to the good sense and natural dignity of our ancestors that, separating Latin cookery from Latin manners, they always sat at table when they feasted on Roman fare.

The familiar stories of their gross and fantastic enjoyments would of themselves demonstrate that the voluptuaries of ancient Rome were incapable of the finer delights of the table. Whether we regard the Augustan spendthrifts, or the later *bon-vivants* of the Eastern and Western empires, it may be asserted that the Roman sensualist was devoid of nice perceptions. Always a glutton, he was never

an epicure in the modern sense of the term. The dishes with which he gorged himself, appealed to the fancy rather than the palate; and his imagination preferred grotesque, and even repulsive, ideas to pleasant and cheerful associations. Vedia Pollio, who could not relish a lamprey unless he could imagine it to have been fattened on human flesh, was a type of the many Roman gourmands whose appetite was quickened by cruel fancies. Like the Australian digger, who ate bank-note sandwiches, the Roman gastronomer delighted to eat and drink money. If he could not obtain, or was too amiable to desire, dishes seasoned with human agony, he required patellæ of inordinate cost, and relished them in proportion to the amount of labour expended on their preparation.

Five thousand pounds of money were expended on the pie which made Æsop, the player, famous amongst wasteful feeders, and was believed by the purchaser to have been made of birds that could imitate human voices. Clodius, the son of this preposterous connoisseur of bird-pies, peppered his drink with powdered pearls, and had no gust for the daintiest dish, unless his cook could assure him that a precious stone was one of its ingredients. The imperial inventor of lobster rissoles delighted in salmagundis, made chiefly of the tongues and brains of small birds excellent for musical voice

or brilliance of plumage; and Septimius Geta is memorable for hotch-potches whose various meats, selected without any reference to their flavours, bore names beginning with the same letter of the alphabet. Sheer wastefulness, that squandered on the whimsical humours of a single person the money which, with discriminating expenditure, might have brought felicity to a thousand intelligent epicures, reached its climax in the kitchens of the Apicius of Augustan Rome, who surpassed all the money-eaters of his time in bootless prodigality. The strongest passion of this gormandizing fool was for ragouts of half-a-hundred more or less incongruous elements; and when he had weakened his intellect, and destroyed a naturally fine digestion by gastronomic absurdities, he put a violent end to his excesses with a cup of poison. Having squandered on his belly, in the course of a few years, something more than a million and a half of money (English), he killed himself, rather than prolong existence on the wretched eighty or hundred thousand pounds that still remained in his exchequer.

Were it needful to produce other biographical illustrations against the epicureanism prevalent in the wealthiest circles of ancient Rome, we should select them from anecdotes told of Vitellius, who in less than eight months made away with seven

millions sterling (English money) in extravagances of the table, and encouraged gluttons to prepare themselves for additional courses by taking emetics. Another emperor, famous in the annals of gulosity, was Tiberius, who, with the aid of his courtly physicians, could protract a single banquet for thirty-six hours.

The evidence of such stories accords with the more precise and conclusive testimony of the extant receipts for the choicest dishes of the Roman gluttons. There is no want of information respecting the principles and details of the cuisine that, brought to perfection in ancient Rome, has not to this day been altogether superseded by a better cookery in some of the Latin peoples. A perusal of Dr. Lister's edition of the pseudo-Apicius's cookery-book will instruct the curious scholar respecting the characteristics of the food most grateful to the Roman palate, and also respecting the processes for preparing its principal varieties. Those who are curious, without being scholarly, may gather a sufficient supply of the same information from Mr. Coote's "Cuisine Bourgeoise of Ancient Rome."

Covering a period of some three hundred years, that began in the days of the Republic and closed in the time subsequent to Heliogabalus, the "De Arte

"Coquinariâ" gives us precepts followed by chefs of a date long anterior to the compiler's generation. The choicest receipts of distant ages appear in its records. In this respect, the work resembles modern compilations of the same kind, which together with rules for making dishes, popular in Tudor times, contain directions for producing the choicest delicacies of Ude and Francatelli. The dates, at which some of the Apician dishes were invented, or at least enjoyed a high reputation, may be inferred from the names of famous personages referred to by the titles of the *plats*. But most of the receipts afford no indication of the decades in which they were composed. The entire collection, however, affords an equally comprehensive and minute picture of the Roman cuisine, when Roman luxury was at its height. The compiler is unknown; but if he was not some great man's chef, he was probably some fashionable *gourmet* who assumed, for his literary purpose, a name that had for generations blazed in culinary annals.

It would only weary the reader to burden these pages with Apician details, which the curious can readily gather for themselves, and none but the curious would peruse with interest. Nor would the ordinary perusers of a popular work be thankful for a diversity of receipts which they certainly

would not desire their cooks to execute. It is enough for the present undertaking to call attention to the prominent features of Roman cookery, and to a few receipts that illustrate its leading principles.

CHAPTER IV.

APICIAN PRECEPTS.

"From these receipts we may acquire some idea of the complicated and heterogeneous messes which formed the most exquisite delicacies of a Roman table. At the present day, nothing can be conceived more disgusting than many of these dishes; since a variety of ingredients from which a modern would shrink with abhorrence, were cast into them by the cooks of Rome with a lavish hand. Assafoetida, rue, &c., were used in almost every high-seasoned dish; and we meet repeatedly with the extraordinary mixtures of oil and wine, honey, pepper, and the putrid distillation from stinking fish. In short, the Roman cook seems to have gone in direct opposition to the selection which the poet makes Eve use in preparing an entertainment, "For," says he, "she so contrived as not to mix

Tastes not well joined, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste, upheld with kindliest change."

Vide Rev. RICHARD WARNER's "ANTIQUITATES CULINARIAE."

NOTHING can be more liberal and satisfactory than the list of materials employed by the Roman chef. Together with most of the meats, and several kinds of the poultry, still used most largely in European kitchens, his larder contained creatures now-a-days neglected as distasteful, if not condemned as unclean. Though he held it in low esteem, he had need of beef. Wild mutton, veal, lamb, kid, and venison commanded his zealous

attention; but pork, of all meats the most acceptable to the ancient epicures of the sunny South, he could not regard without emotion, or mention without enthusiasm.

Tears of joyful anticipation rolled down his cheeks when the fat porker dropped dead at his feet; and, as he wiped from the prostrate creature's lips the stains of the sweet intoxicating drink which had induced the fatal apoplexy, he smiled with tender exultation. He had reason to love the animal which afforded him materials for his daintiest preparations. His varieties of porcine *plats* are almost countless. The spit, the gridiron, the frying-pan, the oven, the boiler, and the stew-pan were all employed by turns in preparing the flesh which was the passion of Roman epicures, and to which the culinary professors could impart no less than eighty different flavours. The Romans were consumers of pork-haggis and various kinds of pork sausages. But the Apician cook was never prouder of himself and his profession than when he sniffed the fragrant exhalations of a small baked pig which had been stuffed with a compound of thrushes, beccaficos, minced "pluck," dates, onions, snails, mallows, beets, leeks, celery, cabbage, coriander seeds, pepper, pine-nuts, eggs and garum. His hands trembled with fine emotion, as he made a deep incision down the porker's back,

and poured into it a hot mixture of pepper, rue, garum, sweet wine, honey and oil, thickened with frumenty.

The same grossness of taste, which made these epicures of a hot climate prefer pork to more delicate meats, is seen in their choice of four-footed game and birds. The hare, whose strong flavour renders it barely acceptable to the more fastidious palates of modern connoisseurs, was prized by the Latin *bon-vivant* above all other ground-game. The goose and peacock were not more esteemed at Augustan tables than the phœnicopteros and the parrot; and in the sixth book of his Treatise pseudo-Apicius gives a receipt for creatures that he frankly designates “stinking birds” (*aves hircosas*), a class including Ardean cranes and other piscivorous fowl.

The time has now arrived for us to sip the nasty compound of honey, wine, mucilage, and spice, with which the luxurious Roman whetted his appetite and prepared his palate for every important feast. The Conditum Paradoxum, as pseudo-Apicius calls it, or the Promulsis, as it is more commonly termed, has always been a chief difficulty with modern apologists of the Roman cuisine. Mr. Coote, who grows fervid about the excellences of a sauce made chiefly from the putrid intestines of fish, is significantly silent

concerning the introductory sirup. When Lord Lytton, in the "Last Days of Pompeii," endeavoured to rouse his readers' sympathy for the pleasures of a Pompeian supper, he coyly misrepresented the Promulsis as a drink "of diluted wine sparingly mixed with honey." The exactness of the Apician receipt for the preparation of "the whet" (!) leaves us in no doubt as to the proportion of honey in the cloying liquor, which was compounded in this manner. Six pints of honey, two pints of wine, four ounces of powdered pepper, three ounces of sweet gum, one drachm of spike-nard leaves, one drachm of saffron, and five drachms of dried dates were mixed and boiled three several times. It does not appear how much the three boilings reduced the compound. Having been thus concocted, the mess received sixteen pints of wine, when it was regarded as a choice preliminary confection for an elaborate feast. Six pints of honey is no "sparing" proportion of sweet stuff to eighteen pints of wine. Certainly the "preparation" would not dispose a modern palate to relish the following delicacies. Sooner than begin his dinner with a glass of such a fluid, any epicure of the Carlton Club would attune his palate for a coming dinner with half a pint of treacle and table-beer, seasoned with all-spice.

In connection with the heavily sweetened wine

of the Promulsis, mention may be here made of the Roman taste for wines medicated with mawkish savours that would utterly destroy the fine virtues of the best vintage. Rosatum and Violatium were in high esteem with Apician epicures. The former drink was made thus. Several bags (as many as possible) of dried rose petals were put into a cask, and covered with good wine. The infusion having stood for seven days, the rose-leaves were firmly squeezed, so that the liquor might have every drop of their scented juice. Another and equally large supply of dried petals was then put into the cask, and treated in the same way. This process was repeated yet again; and when the wine had been completely loaded with roseate essence, the tincture was put away for use on highly festal occasions. It would have been more properly thrown into the nearest sewer. Violatium was made in the same manner, with petals of violets instead of petals of roses. It is impossible that people who enjoyed such preparations, fit only for an apothecary's shop, could appreciate the subtler excellences of the fermented grape.

It is the custom of the champions of the Roman cuisine to deplore the misfortune that we endure in the disappearance of the culinary "laser," and in the still more grievous loss of the process for

making garum. Mr. Coote is touchingly pathetic on each of these subjects. Dr. Lister was scarcely less emotional. Though it was akin to the growth from which we derive the stinking assafœtida, the Cyrenaic silphium, or laser, yielded a juice which, could it be recovered, would be found inexpressibly delightful to the taste and smell of modern epicures. The apologists have no misgivings on this point, because the Roman chefs seized every occasion for throwing its requisite flavour into their pottages, hashes, mince-patinæ, sausages, and sauces. How could the thing so delectable to palates which relished Promulsis and Rosatum, have been otherwise than highly and naturally agreeable? But prejudice is stubborn; and men who have fled in fancy from the “irruption of intolerable smells,” which Mr. Pallet’s carving-knife evoked from a certain fowl to Peregrine Pickle’s diversion and disgust, are slow to believe that any laserpitian spice ever possessed a *natural* pleasantness. Against the apologists, it is urged that the very way in which the Romans are known to have used their favourite herb, declares it to have been a thing of a powerfully pungent savour that could be felt and smelt above all the other half-hundred flavours requisite for the more elaborate products of the Roman cuisine. Smollett may have taken a too professional view of the subject. His judgment

may have been disturbed by his medical acquaintance with an abominably noisome extract. He may have written wildly and in utter ignorance. But it is certain that, had the beloved laser been a spice of delicate virtues, they would have been absolutely effectless in a strongly seasoned dish, compounded of several incongruous meats and as many discordant spices. In short, the general characteristics of the cookery discredit the particular ingredient.

To pass from the herb of which the moderns are said to know nothing, to a sauce about which they certainly know a good deal. The Romans had many condiments, more or less acceptable to their palates and hurtful to their digestions; but garum—or liquamen, as the same preparation was also termed—was the seasoning most largely used by the Apician chefs, and most enthusiastically extolled by Apician epicures. Amphoræ, bearing the almost sacred inscription of “Liquamen Optimum,” have been exhumed at Pompeii, the pleasant watering-place where the gourmands of the capital revived their jaded appetites with the sea-breeze. At home, no banquet was approved unless garum dominated the flavours of most of the dishes. It was used in soups and stews, in ragouts and sausages, in force-meats and salmagundis of fishes. Improving most

materials, and agreeing with all, it was poured liberally on flesh, fish, game, and fowl, and hundreds of messes, each of which contained from a dozen to fifty ingredients. When he is in doubt the young whist-player plays a trump, if he can. In moments of uncertainty the Roman cook used the never-absent garum. Oil was silver, liquamen was gold. The rich and luxurious used the garum which was termed emphatically "optimum." There were inferior kinds of the sauce for the poor and thrifty.

This exquisite condiment was obtained from the intestines, gills, and blood of fishes, great and small, stirred together with salt, and exposed in an open vat to the sun, until the compound was putrid. Nothing is known as to the proportions of the several piscine ingredients; but whilst small fishes were thrown whole into the vessel, the larger fishes—such as tunny, sturgeon, and mackerel—contributed nothing to the mess, save their gills, internal parts, and juices. When putrefaction had done its work, wine and spice-herbs were added to the liquefied garbage. Finally, the liquor of this loathsome compound was strained, and sent in amphoræ from Greece to the Roman market. Something like this sauce might doubtless be obtained by an artful treatment of fetid catsup, and caviare, so far gone to the bad that the few and the many

would agree in their estimate of its virtues. Anyhow, it was darksome, saltish, biting, and beastly. But the ingenious apologists, already alluded to, regard liquamen fondly. Admitting the repulsiveness of the raw materials, and also the nauseating character of the sadly imperfect accounts of its manufacture, they are sure that, *if we knew* the whole process, there would be an end to the illiberal prejudice against the appetizing fluid. The Romans (runs the apology) were too elegant epicures to like anything that was not good; for centuries the Romans prized liquamen above all sauces; *ergo* liquamen was the best of piquant sauces, and would be in keen demand at our Pall Mall clubs, if we could only recover the secret of making it properly. "There lurks a mystery," says Mr. Coote, "in the details handed down to us of its mode of preparation." The daring experimentalist* who shall

* "This brings us," Mr. Coote observes with much fine feeling, "to the real problem of Roman cookery, the flavour imported by that confection," (i.e., garum), "to the sauces with which it intercommunicated. Looking at this from the point of view of the kitchen, it is no other than a grave æsthetical question. If we can solve it in any way, we shall penetrate to the bottom of the Roman system. Without experiments, which will probably never be made, though Soyer vehemently desired them, we know so much as this, that the materials of the zest were fish, that salt was an adjunct, and that fermentation in the sun was the means of effecting a union more or less chemical between these well pronounced elements."—*Vide Coote's "CUISINE BOURGEOISE OF ANCIENT ROME."*

apprehend and penetrate this lurking mystery, will relieve Apician cookery of unmerited opprobrium, and raise the modern to the level of the ancient table.

Prejudice may cause men to condemn what is good. It may also make them admire what is bad. And of the prejudice which disposes the mind to discover nothing but goodness in things that are faulty, we cannot acquit the critics, who declare that a sauce must have been excellent because it was highly esteemed by the Apician epicures, who could relish oysters, properly dressed with pepper and vinegar, and at the same time serve them with honey.* In another Chapter we shall see how our feudal forefathers, imitating the old Romans in this last particular, put sugar on their oysters—an atrocity that will seem almost incredible to lovers of the delicate “native!”

No impartial inquirer can peruse the Apician

* The Apician precepts for treating oysters are significant. Here is an atrocious mixture for the improvement of our “natives,” which the Roman prized less for their delicacy of flavour than out of regard to the difficulty of procuring them: “Pepper, lovage of Lombardy, parsley, dry mint, spikenard leaves, Indian spikenard leaves, cumin (in larger quantity), *honey*, vinegar, and liquamen.” Apicius, the cook, gives another receipt for a sauce for oysters in these words: “Piper, ligusticum, ovi vitellum, acetum, liquamen, oleum et vinum, si volueris et mel addes.”

code, without seeing that the Romans were ignorant of the first principles which should always control the manufacture and administration of condiments. Not that all their sauces were altogether faulty. On the contrary, they had a few preparations that would be acceptable to palates of the present time. Oxyporon,* the Apician sharp-sauce, for instance, was no contemptible zest, though it contained a large proportion of so coarse a spice as ginger. But when he had a supply of fairly good sauces, the Apician chef, instead of relying on any one of them, destroyed their special efficacy, by mixing them with half-a-dozen grosser preparations.

At the present date, it will not be questioned that the four chief functions of sauces are:—1. To quicken the palate to high sensibility of the distinctive flavour of material. 2. To enhance the said flavour. 3. To produce a new flavour, otherwise unattainable, by the combination of the sauce's virtues with the distinctive savour of the material.

* Here is the receipt for oxyporon: Take two ounces of cumin, one ounce of ginger, one ounce of green rue, six scruples of salt-petre, twelve scruples of fine dates, one ounce of pepper, nine ounces of honey. Beat and mix with vinegar. This being a favourable example, the reader will know what to think of the unfavourable specimens, of Roman sauces. As Robson, the comedian, used to say of thin claret, oxyporon might go fairly well with a salad, in the absence of every kind of proper dressing.

4. To supply a natural deficiency in the texture of a material, as when a cleverly concocted sauce gives juiciness and lubricity to a dry, rough-grained viand. Of course, at seasons of privation and grievous difficulty, it devolves on the chef to disguise the evil qualities of repulsive material, or impart sapidity to insipid meats. The first Napoleon's cook signalized himself in this dismal department of his art during the retreat from Moscow. The late siege of Paris tried the inventiveness of cooks in the same field of deception. In the kitchens, also, of the cheap and rather nasty dining-places of the Palais Royal, the cook's first object is to hide the miserable deficiencies of his material with sauces that confuse whilst they tickle the palate. But, occasions of emergency excepted, such artifice is indefensible. The sauce that kills a fine natural flavour, without utilizing it nobly, is nothing else than a murderous device.

That the Roman epicures were utterly ignorant of these axioms is seen in their barbaric messes of half a hundred multifarious and hostile ingredients. In their *isicia* and *patinæ* they combined meats which, for flavour's sake, should be kept separate; and having thus brought several incongruous materials into unnatural juxtaposition, they seasoned them with an even larger number of dis-

cordant additaments ; sweet and acidulous, heating and cooling, rough and lubricous, saline and mucilaginous. In fact, their highly artificial cuisine was remarkable chiefly for its incessant and clumsy employment of artifices to disguise flavour and paralyze the taste. Instead of cherishing and emphasizing delicate flavours, the Roman chef's misdirected industry smothered them.

In one respect the competent chef of ancient Rome was above praise. If the succulence of his *plats* was excessive, and if their seasonings were preposterous, no one can deny them to have been exquisitely tender. The Roman epicure's tooth was more fastidious than his palate. He could relish what was nasty, but he revolted against what was tough. Woe and stripes, if not instant death, befell the culinary slave who sent a hard or leathery viand to a gastronomic senator's table. He was lucky if he was not dragged summarily from his kitchen to the festal chamber, and flogged in the presence of the furious Amphitryon and the guests whom he had wronged so grievously. To satisfy this paramount demand for tenderness, the chef was an unsparing user of the mincing-knife, pestle, and stew-pan. He chopped and diced, and dissected infinitesimally the materials of which his *isicia*, and *patinæ*, and *minutalia* were compounded. Having done his best with the knife and the mincing-

board, he went to work with the pestle and mortar, and pounded the muscle of fish, flesh, and fowl into a delicate pulp, that eventually appeared on the table, in lightly fried or boiled portions. The Latin epicure's delight in plates of dormice was chiefly due to the exquisite tenderness of the insipid flesh. Potted meat comes to us through the mediæval kitchens from imperial Rome. Our "minces" are the lineal descendants of the dishes which the Romans termed "minutalia," out of regard to the minute dissection of the viands employed for their composition.

The Roman cuisine, be it also observed, had a vegetable basis. The numerous pottages in which the Latin epicures delighted were made chiefly of prepared grain and pot-herbs, seasoned with wine and sauces to the taste. Barley, wheat, rice, peas, beans, gourds, were all used for the manufacture of the highly nutritive soups, which were often enriched with pulp of pounded meat, and morsels of tenderly stewed flesh, but never failed to exhibit their vegetable foundation. Often these porridges were sweetened with honey, and sharpened with liquamen. Some of the lighter Roman pottages resembled closely the thin vegetable soups of the modern Lenten table. But none of them are comparable with the clear gravy soups of the nineteenth century. The Roman cared little for the pure

flavour of meat-juice, though he employed it sparingly in his meretricious sauces. A soup, chiefly excellent for preserving the distinctive taste of the natural viand, was no delicacy to his undiscerning palate.

Relishing his joints of baked and boiled meat, and his joints cooked by both processes, his broiled collops served with liquamen and spices, and large birds cooked whole, the Roman gourmand was especially particular about his "made dishes," consisting chiefly of minced and pounded meats. These *isicia*, *patinæ*, and *minutalia* were sometimes made of a dozen or more different species of flesh; but for the simplest *plats* a single meat and numerous seasonings were sufficient. Meat or corn paste entered into the composition of several of them.

The *Patina Apicana*, one of the costliest and most elegant of these preparations, was an achievement that doubtless made its inventor famous in the kitchens of his period. To produce this dainty, the chef took goblets of stewed sow's udder, flesh of several fishes, meat of chickens and other young things, a score or so beccaficoes, as many stewed breasts of thrushes, and whatever other meats appeared to him to be especially good (*et quæcunque optima fuerint.*) The beccaficoes excepted, he

minced these ingredients minutely. His next care was to mix raw eggs with oil, season the mixture with triturated pepper and lovage, and pour liquamen, oil, wine, and sweet wine into it. This compound having been boiled and thickened with frumenty, it received the minced stuff and beccaficoes. The entire composition having been boiled thoroughly, it was poured upon layers of peppered pine-apple, each layer of the stew-laden fruit being divided from the layer above it by a thin wafer biscuit. A biscuit of the same kind was broken into small pieces and sprinkled on the top layer, which was also lightly peppered. The only one of the several ingredients of a feaster's portion of this dish that retained its natural taste, or had any distinctive flavour, was the beccafico, which was of course a delicious surprise.

Haggis, as the Scotch term it, was a favourite preparation with Romans; but, instead of mincing the flesh used for this dish, they as often as not brayed it in a mortar, with liquamen and seasonings, till it became a soft pulp. The usual farinaceous ingredient of the Roman haggis was frumenty; but often no grain was employed. The Apician pork-haggis—esteemed above all other compositions of the same kind—was a boiled pig's stomach filled with fry and brain, raw eggs, and pine-apple, beaten

into a pulp, and treated with the never absent sauces and seasonings.

The same epicures showed their nice appreciation of the chicken's delicate flavour in the following process. Having boned the fowl, they first minced the flesh, and then brayed it with liquamen in a mortar to a pulp. Farinaceous ingredients were added ; and when the composition had been spiced with pepper and other strong condiments, it was boiled or fried, and sent to table in wine-sauce. Any insipid meat, or piece of pliant leather would have done as well for this mess, as the tender and tasteful flesh of a pullet.

The Romans were more reasonable in their treatment of vegetables, though they used the mincing knife far too freely in preparing them. Great were their pains to impart a more than natural greenness to their pot-herbs : a laudable aim, though, in achieving it, they often sacrificed flavour to colour by a too liberal employment of nitre. “*Omne olus,*” says the author of the ‘*De Arte Coquinaria,*’ “*smaragdinum fiet, si cum nitro co-quatur.*”

Respecting the sweetmeats and prepared fruits of the Roman table, there is no need to speak fully in the present Chapter. It may, however, be remarked that the confectioners and other culinary specialists of ancient Rome were no less ingenious

and fantastic than the general practitioners of cookery. Enough for the present of the Apician method, to which it will be necessary to refer in subsequent chapters for purposes of illustration and comparison.

CHAPTER V.

THE FORME OF CURY.

"Many of the receipts contained in the 'Forme of Cury,' are indeed, as unintelligible to a modern, as the hieroglyphics of an Egyptian pillar; but such as we do understand, are not calculated to prejudice us in favour of the culinary art of the fourteenth century. The combination of such a variety of articles in the formation of one dish would produce an effect very unpleasant to a palate of this day, and the quantity of hot spices would now be relished only by those most accustomed to the high-seasoned dishes of the East and West Indies."—*Vide Warner's INTRODUCTION TO THE "ANTIQUITADES CULINARIAE."*

THE cuisine, at which we have been glancing, was the cookery which the Romans practised at home and conveyed to their remotest provinces. For the benefits thus extended to them, the imperial dependencies paid with materials for the development of gastronomy in the luxurious metropolis. Whilst she procured liquamen from Greece, and her choicest spices from Asia, Rome obtained her fattest and juiciest oysters in the Northern Island whose aborigines she had taught to make soups and ragouts, *i.e.*, dishes of "*rare goût*."

A system that took root and flourished in whatever soil it was planted, this cookery survived the

power which carried it to every region of the Roman world. Its precepts were obeyed by races ignorant of its history, and by generations to whom the very name of its originators was unknown. Alike acceptable to Celt and Teuton, it gratified the primæval inhabitants of Northern Gaul and their Germanic conquerors. The equally daring and pliant Scandinavians, who assumed the name and customs of the Franks, found it on their adopted soil, and with a fine superiority to prejudice they acquired a taste for Latin dishes, whilst they learnt to speak a variety of the Latin tongue.

Of course this marvellous diffusion of Latin gastronomy was not effected with uniform ease and quickness. It must have stirred local jealousies, and encountered opposition in rude peoples wedded to their less troublesome modes of preparing food. Just as our ancestors of a later period stubbornly resisted the introduction of Justinian law, and with suspicious jealousy limited its operation to "some particular cases and some particular courts," when they had reluctantly submitted to its requirements "on account of some peculiar propriety," it must have been that Apician law found contemptuous deriders and resolute opponents amongst the Celtic and German communities of Roman Britain. But slowly undermining obstacles which she could not carry by *coups de main*, Latin cookery in course

of time soothing the fretful animosities of the Briton, and warming the blood of the sluggish Teuton, became equally dear to both elements of the populace. She may have languished on this soil after the Roman retirement. She may have pined for want of competent professors and intelligent patrons. She may have subsequently derived a sorely needed stimulus from the luxurious tastes of the Norman conquerors. But it is absurd to suppose that she was powerless to retain the hearts which she had won completely; and that the withdrawal of the Southern legions was a signal for her ignominious ejection from the thousands of kitchens which had for generations submitted to her genial sway, and from the thousands of homes which depended upon her for their chief enjoyments, if not for their actual sustenance.

The fare which had nourished the Norman in France was fare of Roman invention, and in its chief principles and the majority of its details was the same good cheer that had for centuries smoked on Saxon boards. Had the case been otherwise, the Conqueror would perhaps have endeavoured to force his food as well as his language down the throats of the conquered people. But circumstances afforded him neither pretext nor opportunity for such a display of insolence. Though he might deride the Saxon menus for their want of tastefulness and variety,

and scorn the Saxon cooks for their unskilfulness, he could not deny that the ordinary broths, brewets, and hashes of the subjugated Angles were identical in material, consistency, and seasoning with the common pottages, stews, and hotchpots of his own people.

Norman influence on our mediæval cookery has been greatly exaggerated by the several romantic writers and antiquaries who have too hastily argued from insufficient data that all dishes, bearing names of Norman-French etymology, were things of Norman invention. Because the French intruders distinguished half-a-dozen meats by Norman names, it has been inferred that the viands were peculiar to the people who thus styled them with words of Latin derivation. The misleading teachers have gone yet further. Observing that, whilst the dead meats were called by French names at French tables, the living animals were known to the Saxons by Saxon names, they have argued that, whilst the Normans were the sole eaters of the meats, the Saxons were the only tenders of the animals. Saxon serfs drove *oxen*, in order that Norman gentry might have *beef*. The flesh of calves was only seen on the tables where it bore a French designation. The Norman nobles ate pork at their pleasure; it was enough for Saxon slaves to be *swine-herds*.

Sir Walter Scott was not the originator of this

foolish theory ; but in a careless moment he adopted it in a passage remembered by every reader of " Ivanhoe." After remarking to Gurth, the dull swine-herd, that swine are Saxons during life, and Normans when they have passed through the butcher's hands, Wamba, the Saxon jester of a Saxon household, explains his miserable witticism step by step. " And pork, I think, is good Norman-French," the wit observes to the witless serf; " and so when the brute lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name ; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the castle-hall to feast among the nobles : what dost thou think of this, friend Gurth, ha ?" Gurth admits it to be " too true doctrine," though coming from a fool's mouth. Encouraged by his comrade's approval, Wamba continues, " Nay, I can tell you more ; there is old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet while he is under the charge of serfs and bondsmen such as thou, but becomes beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynheer Calf, too, becomes Monsieur de Veau in the like manner : he is a Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment." Again the Saxon Gurth sees his com-

panion's "points," and assents to the smart talker's "too true doctrine."

Perhaps Wamba's knowledge of Norman-French is not inappropriate to a jester, whose business it was to observe social fashions and turn them to fun. The Saxon fool—albeit the fool of a Saxon lord, who smarted under the insolence and detested the ways of the French intruders—may not be wise in Norman matters, beyond the requirements of his vocation. But it is strange that stupid Gurth, the Saxon swine-herd of the Saxon proprietor, should have known enough Norman-French to catch Wamba's philological points. Whence came this familiarity with Norman terms to the stupid serf who, for fear of a flogging, would not have dared to utter one of them in his master's hearing? And how came he to approve so cordially the fool's assertion that, on becoming matters of enjoyment, ox-flesh, calf's-flesh, and swine's-flesh were known only by Norman words? Dullard though he was, he must have known that swine's-flesh was consumed daily at the board of his irascible lord, who would have flushed with rage and sworn terribly on hearing any Saxon guest call it "pork." Gurth, we may be sure, had personal experience of the flavour of swine's-flesh; and Wamba often received a cut of swine's brawn in payment for a saucy speech. Both of them knew that ox-flesh and

calf's-flesh were commonly served under Saxon names to their masters' friends.

To argue that the Saxons never ate bread because the Normans called it by a French name; or to insist that the Saxons were no equestrians because *cheval* is French for a horse, and the Norman knights were *chivalric* persons, would not be more absurd than to infer from the Norman names of meats and dishes that the same viands never smoked on the tables of the vanquished race. Indeed, were it not for Scott's name, and the results of his influence, we would give neither consideration nor ridicule to the arguments against Saxon cookery, that depend altogether on a hasty survey of the nomenclature of the Anglo-Norman cuisine. But, strangely enough, the flimsiest page of a charming novel has been mistaken for good history, and placed in books of serious instruction. The words put (be it remembered, in justice to the great novelist) into the lips of a merry fool have been accepted at Gurth's valuation by men who were scribes instead of swineherds. And having thus adopted as "but too true doctrine" what they should have only smiled at as a wild suggestion, the solemn reproducers of a piquant blunder assure our studious children that the Saxons of the twelfth century were clearly no eaters of swine's flesh, *because the Normans called it "pork."*

Our sources of information respecting the cookery of our forefathers, from the Norman conquest to the Reformation, are various and abundant. They are, moreover, so precise that no uncertainty covers any greatly important question about the English cuisine during this long period. They comprise collections of receipts, menus of famous feasts, admonitions to culinary apprentices, hints to gentle servitors, ceremonious orders for the table, and lists of the materials consumed at particular banquets. Some of the older and more important of these multifarious rules and records may be found in Warner's "Antiquitates Culinariæ," that, together with curious tracts, and some illustrative notes of considerable value, contains the "Forme of Cury," which the Reverend Samuel Pegge edited with a sufficient glossary, in 1780, eleven years before the appearance of the Reverend Richard Warner's large and more ambitious publication.

Compiled in days when women practised medicine, and cookery was an art regularly followed for honour and profit by reverend physicians of the sterner sex, the "Forme of Cury" was produced by the principal cooks of that "best and royalest viander of all Christian kings," Richard the Second. The concise language of an old manuscript certifies that these compilers were "the *chef* maister cokes of Kyng Richard," and that their literary work was

done “by assent and argument of maisters of phisik and philosophie that dwellid in his court.” The former of which announcements indicates a Norman source for the familiar French title of a supreme cook, whilst the latter furnishes evidence of the close connection of the culinary and medical arts in feudal times. If our old surgeons were barbers, our ancient physicians were cooks. Nor need the college in Trafalgar Square blush to acknowledge that the mediæval doctors of the highest professional quality and status concerned themselves with the principles and details of an art which, if not an actual department of medicine, is so needful for health, and so nearly related to remedial science, that no sagacious physician can affect to disdain, or afford to neglect it.

Like all works of its kind, this mediæval “Guide for Cooks and Housewives” gives the results of several ages of culinary enterprise. Compiled some three hundred and twenty-five years after the Conquest, it contains receipts for dishes that were novelties in the days of the Plantagenets, and receipts for hashes that smoked on the table of the Conqueror. It gives directions also for the preparation of messes which cautious criticism assigns confidently to Saxon influence. For the most part its nomenclature is Norman ; but, scattered amongst the culinary terms that declare the French lineage of

the majority of the dishes, the reader comes upon names whose Saxon derivation intimates that the epicures of the fourteenth century were not insensible to the merits of savoury compounds, known in England long before the battle of Hastings. The second Richard's cooks teach the apprentice to make broths, brewets, and chewets, three elastic terms that may, in fact, be said to comprehend the greater part of what was appetizing and nutritious in the Plantagenet cuisine. If the "potages," "mortrews," and "vyaundes" of the compilation came hither from ancient Rome through Normandy, a Saxon descent may be claimed for compositions of the same design and merit.

Another noteworthy feature of "The Forme of Cury," is its respectful mention of cheap and homely dishes, adapted to the narrow means of yeomen and artisans, rather than to the fastidious palates of princes. Injustice is done to the compilers when their work is said to exhibit only the culinary condition of the court, without throwing light into the larders and cupboards of humble dwellings. Most of their receipts are for the kitchens of the prosperous. Some of them are directions for the manufacture of delicacies that were even too costly for habitual consumption at rich men's tables. But, whilst providing good cheer for court-revels and baronial festivities, they

give rules for cooking beans and bacon, pea-soup, milk-pottage, beef-hotchpotch, and gourd-pie. A book for the court and courtiers, in respect to its dainties, the “Forme” was also a treatise for the populace, in respect to its receipts for the homely fare which was set before ordinary men under their own roofs, and also before the servants and inferior visitors of royal households.

Whether they came to Plantagenet tables through a Saxon channel, or by way of Normandy, the dishes of our forefathers, of the fourteenth century, are referable to the same ancient source. The cuisine of feudal England was Roman* in its

* Here are some of the most obvious points of resemblance, or rather proofs of identity, in the Roman and mediæval schools of cookery. 1. The large use of frumenty, or other prepared corn, in broths, stews, and hotch-potches. 2. The continual use of the pot, and the less frequent employment of the spit. N.B.—The spit and gridiron were more serviceable in the Roman than in the old English kitchen. 3. The practice of combining in stews and “made dishes” several meats of incongruous flavours. 4. The incessant use of knife and block, pestle and mortar, for mincing and pounding meats. 5. The practice of roasting slightly before boiling, and of boiling before roasting. 6. The lavish exhibition of strong spices, so as to smother the natural flavours of the seasoned meats. 7. The complete ignorance of the prime functions of sauce. 8. The use of saffron, a spice used sparingly by the Romans, and inordinately by the mediævalists, which has altogether disappeared from the modern kitchen. 9. The similarity, amounting almost to identity, of some of the Roman stews and old English hotch-potches. 10. The imaginative predilection shown in the preference of the greater fowl and fish over the smaller, and of unpalatable birds of fine plumage over delicate

principles and details. No one will question this statement, after studying the Apician "Art of Cookery," and comparing it with "Forme of Cury." In both works we see the same materials and processes, the same barbarous treatment of delicate viands with overpowering sauces, and the same delight in messes of multifarious and incongruous ingredients. Some of the choicest compositions of the modern repertory may be found in the ancient collection of receipts, with scarcely the addition of a material or the substitution of a spice. Not, of course, that the two schools of cookery were precisely the same. For instance, the mediævalists were less lavish users of oil than their southern precursors; they had recourse to the spit less frequently, and to the pot even more often than the old Romans; and in default of any such noisome

birds of less attractive feather. The Romans feasted on the parrot, the flamingo, and the peacock, serving the last in his hackel. The old English also delighted in the peacock served thus showily. The swan, also, a bird in no great request with modern gourmands, was prized highly by both Romans and English. Just as the ancients relished their "stinking birds," our ancestors devoured eagerly bustards, cranes, and herons. 11. The taste for such execrable preparations as roast lobster and sweetened oysters. The Romans served our "natives" in honey, the mediævalists dished them in sugar-syrup as well as honey. 12. The extravagant use of honey in sauces for meats. 13. The multifariousness of ingredients in made dishes. 14. The mediæval broths, brewets, and mortrews were the pultes, patinæ, and minutalia of the more ancient cuisine.

condiment as garum, they were spendthrifts and madmen with ginger, cinnamon, cubeb, and other stimulating flavours, which the ancients used less immoderately, or neglected altogether.

Like the Roman cuisine, mediæval cookery had a vegetable basis. Of its half-hundred or so of soups, several consisted altogether of water thickened with boiled frumenty, rice, or pulse, flavoured with pot-herbs, and seasoned with common spices. In this way, also, the mediævalists concocted bean-soup, pea-soup, turnip-soup, cabbage-soup, parsnip-soup, skirret-soup, herb-soup, gourd-pottage, rice-pottage. These thinner broths were sometimes enriched with the liquor of stewed meat or minced viands, but the vegetable dominated over all other ingredients. So also their thicker brewets and stews—messes less substantial than hotch-potches, and more satisfying than the lighter soups—were thickened with bread, frumenty, oatmeal, prepared barley, rice, and products of the garden. The men of feudal England were copious takers of soup; and whilst some of their soups were meat and drink for the ravenous bellies of famished soldiers, others were delicate enough to please a modern epicure. Their Humble-soup, and Pig-soup, and Roe-broth may be named as examples of the former sort. Their Egg-soup and Lark-soup were favourable specimens of the daintier

preparations. Courtiers could appreciate a pottage of small birds boiled in almond broth, flavoured with onions, pellitory, and salt, and enriched with lard. Yeomen smacked their lips over steaming bowls of strongly seasoned “*Perrey of peson*,” i.e., the *purée* of the modern family-table. But the mediæval chefs were even happier in their fish-soups than their flesh-pottages. Skilfully prepared, their eel-broths and sole-broths would extort praise from the most fastidious *gourmets* of the present day. Nor should their muscle-broths and oyster-soups be passed over without commendation. One of their oyster-pottages was execrably overcharged with ginger, sugar, and mace. “Oysters in Cynee,” on the contrary, was a preparation of high merit, if not of genius. But the grand fault of most of their soups was a multifariousness of materials and seasonings, resulting in confusion of flavours and torpor of the palate. The same objection must be made against their more elaborate mortrews and hotch-potches.

The magnificent sides of venison and barons of beef that the popular imagination delights to place before mediæval feasters, seldom or never appeared on the tables of the Plantagenets. When they did not satisfy their hunger with pottages and bread, our mediæval ancestors usually found their more substantial nutriment in hashes, hotch-potches, fine

minces, pies, and viands pounded with the pestle and mortar to a pulp.* The grander creatures of the stall and chase were served in goblets, dices, or still more minute pieces. The smaller animals were ordinarily prepared in the same manner, with an unsparing use of the chopper, mincing-knife, and pestle.

The same was the case with their noblest birds and royal fish. The peacock was sometimes cooked whole; but at feasts, where the gorgeous bird was

* Mortrews, a numerous class of made dishes, derived their name from the *mortarium* in which their meats were beaten and ground to pulp. "Hack it small," "dice it," are the Forme's directions for preparing viands. The goblet—the largest piece of meat served in hash or soup—was about the size of a man's thumb. A goblet (abbreviated to "gob,") as large as two thumbs, was a thing for remark. Remember the nursery rhyme legend of King Arthur's housekeeping:

"When good King Arthur ruled the land
He ruled it like a king;
He stole three pecks of barley meal,
To make a black pudding.

"A black pudding the king did make,
He stuffed it well with plums,
And in it put great "gobs" of fat
As big as my two thumbs.

"The king and queen did eat thereof,
And noblemen beside,
And what they could not eat that day,
The queen next morning fried."

Whatever his period, the writer of this charming doggerel had a just notion of a nobly big goblet.

brought to table in its plumage, its wholeness was often only apparent, the meat having been dissected by the carver, and then restored to the interior of the “*hackel*.” The same remarks are applicable to the crane, the swan, the heron, and other large fowl, which, though sometimes served whole, were often broken into hashes, and were occasionally brought upon the board in pieces, even when for pictorial effect they were offered with the appearance of entirety. The sturgeon, honoured for its size, was usually put upon the board in fragments. “*He schal*,” says the ‘*Forme of Cury*,’ “*be shorn in besys, and stepyd over night, and sodyn longe as flesh: and he schal be etyn in vinegar.*” Capons, chickens, geese, pheasants, partridges, pigeons, and smaller birds were often brought to table whole, and divided artistically by expert carvers, but they were much more often served to the hungry in pies, hashes, mortrews, and thick stews. Where the mediæval epicure had one joint, he had twenty “*made dishes;*” for every whole creature that charmed his sight, there were a dozen hotch-potches to gratify his nostrils with savoury steam. In short, the mediæval cuisine consisted chiefly of soups and spoon-meats. The exceptions to this rule were very few. The collars and sides of brawn, which showed out so grandly amongst the broth-pots and bowls of mortrew, were, in fact, a kind of

cold soup. The cold boar's head, an article of grotesque garniture rather than a *pièce de résistance*, afforded a meat that could be handled conveniently in thick wedge-like slices by eaters unprovided with forks. The fingers also could deal aptly with the thick portions of the smaller game distributed by professional carvers. But, in times prior to the introduction of the fork, spoon-meats were naturally in vogue ; the nice eater avoiding such dishes as he could not "put away" with a mannerly employment of his fingers and solitary utensil.

Like his Roman forerunners, the mediæval epicure lost his temper when his food was not sufficiently tender. An apocryphal story records how William the Conqueror, enraged by the toughness of a half-roasted crane, was on the point of striking his favourite and prime kitchener, William Fitz-Osborne, when Eudo, the courtly dapifer, saved his fellow-servant from the shameful blow. The anecdote may be false with regard to Dr. Freeman's hero, but it doubtless had a truthful foundation in the anger of some princely gourmand suffering under a cook's incompetence. The vianders of olden time must have been often disappointed by the texture of viands taken from creatures whose size had occasioned unreasonable hopes of enjoyment. Notice has already been taken of the principal means employed by the mediævalists to ensure tenderness ;

but it should be also observed that for the attainment of this end they, like the Romans, prepared meat for the spit by parboiling it, and also roasted flesh lightly before committing it to the boiler.

The “sweets,” as they are now-a-days familiarly termed, of the mediæval table, were numerous. They comprised jellies, fruit puddings, fruit tarts, mashes of fruits, blanc-mange of pounded chicken and rose-leaves, divers kinds of mince-pie, almond cakes, milk puddings, similar to the firm custards of the present time, and a variety of devices, grand or minute, manufactured with honey and sugar; but most of these delicacies reveal the bluntness of taste that is displayed in the preparations of meat. No palate with a gust for the singular flavour of quinces would wish them to be stewed, after the “Forme’s” fashion, with lard, honey, yolks of eggs, almond milk, saffron, ginger, pepper, and other strong spices. The fruit of the mediæval mulberry mess can scarcely have been rendered more agreeable by the “strong powder” (a compound of hot spices), salt, sugar, and yolks of eggs beaten into the mash, whose redness was heightened by alkanet. Ap-pulmoy—a favourite mediæval preparation of apples—resembles some of our modern compositions in its principal materials—apples, honey, and rice; but no confectioner of this period would think of seasoning

such a pudding with ginger, pepper, mace, and salt. Another of the “Forme’s” choicest fruit-messes was Rosee, made by this receipt:—“Take thyk mylke as to fore welled. Cast thereto sugar, a gode porcion pynes (*i.e.* mulberries), dates ymynced, canel, and powder gynger, and seeth it, and alye it with floers of white rosis, and floer of rys. Cole it and messe it forth. If thou wilt, instede of almonde mylke, take swete cremes of kyne.” Petals of roses have fallen out of culinary use in England; but so late as the last century, our people put them into tarts, salads, and fruit stews. The practice was of Roman origin.*

Except that they were often seasoned in a fashion offensive to the modern palate, the mediæval bread-puddings, rice-puddings, and standing custards of milk and eggs differed in no important respect from

* The Apician “*patina de rosis*” was a mortrew of rose leaves, brain, and eggs, beaten up with liquamen, pepper, and wine, and fried lightly. Rosee, or rose mortrew, was made in Old England by this receipt: “Take the flowris of rosys, and wash them well in water, and then take almonds, and temper them and seethe them, and take flesh of capons or of hens, and hack it small, and then bray them well in a mortar, and then do it in the rose, so that the flesh accord with the milk, and so that the meat be chargeaunt; and after do it to fire to boyle, and do thereto sugar and saffron, and it be well coloured and rosy of leaves.” Akin to the rose-mortrews were the blanc-mange mortrews made of pounded chicken, ground rice, pounded almonds, or almond-creme. Of course they were stiff, sometimes they were coloured with saffron; in which case, however, they were still called blanc-mange.

our familiar preparations of the same kind. The same may be said of the old English pancakes, and fritters of sliced fruits clothed with batter. The plum-pudding of our Christmas dinners, fondly regarded by popular fancy as the ancientest compound of “true Old English” fare, is a comparatively modern invention. No older than the Restoration, it did not altogether supersede plum-porridge (a mess of unquestionably mediæval descent) before the close of the last century. But we find in the “Forme,” receipts for one or two puddings made with raisins, figs, eggs, honey, wine, and bread fried in grease, which may, at least, be said to have furnished culinary inventors with the first rude notion of an English plum-pudding.

Mince-meat and mince-pies are articles of Christmas fare still made very much after the fashion of the mediævalists, who delighted to combine dried fruits and meats in chopt messes. The Plantagenet epicures had crustards or standing pies of divers kinds—crustards of venison, birds, pork; crustards of fish; and crustards of fruit. These preparations had another familiar name, the grander being tarts, and the smaller tartlets. And of these pies with a designation, respecting which more will be said hereafter, none were more popular than such as contained in their “cofyns,” or “traps” of paste, a mixture of apples, spices, figs, raisins, and pears,

chopt together, or beaten into a pulp with the pestle and mortar. “For to make tartys in applis,” say Richard the Second’s chief master-cook “take gode applys, and gode spycis, and figgs, and reysons, and perys, and wan they are wel ybrayed, coloure wyth saffron well; and do yt in a cofyn, and do yt forth to bake wel.” Lenten tarts and tartlets contained fish pulled to pieces, or shred, amongst the sweet ingredients. So also meat tarts for festal seasons contained minced or shred flesh together with the fruits and sweeter elements of modern “minced meat.” Like the housekeepers of our time, mediæval cooks kept stocks of minced fruits, such as their “Fygee” and “Dates in Compost,” in “earthen vessels ready for use.”

Enough has been said in this general survey of old English cookery to satisfy the ordinary reader that, whilst it possessed the redeeming features, it retained the most vicious practices of the Apician school, from which it was derived, or, rather, of which it was only a modern period. In respect to its chief aims, tenderness and succulency,* it was

* To impart to their hashes and “gallimawfreys,” the richness and lubricity which the old English epicures desired even more than tenderness, the Plantagenet cooks were lavish exhibitors of fat, oil, and lard. Olive-oil was in great request with them, lard entered into the composition of most of their meat-messes, and also into many of their preparations of fruit. They were, however, sparing

triumphant. With regard to flavours, it achieved scarcely anything but confusion. Pegge was not unjust, when he remarked of it contemptuously, “But after all the avysement of physicians and philosophers, its processes do not appear by any means to be well calculated for the benefit of recipients, but rather inimical to them. Many of them are such strange and heterogeneous compositions, mere olios and gallimawfreys, that they seem removed as far as possible from the intention of contributing to health; indeed the messes are so redundant and complex, that in regard to herbs, no less than ten are used, where we should now be content with two or three.” The particular receipt to which the editor pointed in demonstration of this last remark, is one for a good broth. Given in modern spelling, the direction runs thus: “Take borage, colewort, bugloss, parsley, beet-root, orach, avens, violets, savory, fennel, and when they are boiled, press them well small, cast them

users of butter and cheese, as culinary instruments and ingredients, at least in comparison with their successors of modern England. The Norman cheese, which took its special name from Rouen was their most highly esteemed cheese. Though it never went out of general use, as an agreeable lubricator of bread, from the time of the early Saxons, butter seems to have fallen out of *fashion* after the Norman conquest. Anyhow it was sparingly used in the processes of the best kitchens of strictly feudal England.

in good broth, and seethe them and serve them forth."

In this undiscerning use of sauce-herbs, the mediæval followed the example of the Apician cooks. The *farced grewels* of the old English housewives were, as Mr. Coote observes, the savoury *pultes* of the Roman ancients. It should, also, be borne in mind that the herbs, administered so freely, were given medicinally, as well as for flavour. In times when physicians were operative cooks, and epicures went to the same professors for physic and food, a culinary receipt was often a remedial prescription. Each of the herbs of the last given receipt either had, or was supposed to have, curative virtues; and it was committed to the broth out of regard for the consumer's health. To catch the precise significance and "lurking mystery" of each of the several herbs thrown into the same mess by the cooks of the olden time, the special student should have recourse to the "Herbals," which show why the herb-doctors of the same period put, as many of the same ingredients into their strictly medical potions and conserves. The same quackery which invented medical justifications of the Roman method of flavouring dishes, became a barrier to culinary advancement. Forbidding experiments and deriding novelties, it fostered a superstitious

reverence for bad cookery, and gave an evil name to gastronomic "free thought." Taste could not assert its rights, so long as all the wise men and wise women of the country recommended, for health's sake, what was distasteful.

CHAPTER VI.

CULINARY COLOURISTS.

“July 23, 1670. This is in Saffron Walden parish, famous for that useful plant, with which all the country is covered.”—*Vide JOHN EVELYN’s “DIARY.”*

“The flower consisteth of six small blew leaves tending to purple, having in the middle many very small yellow strings and threads; among which are two, three, or more thicke fat chives of a fierie colour, somewhat reddish, of a strong smell when they be dried, which doth stiffe and trouble the head. . . . The chives steeped in water serve to illumine or (as we say) limne pictures and imagerie, and also to colour meats and confections.”—*Vide GERARDE’s “HERBAL.”*

“Saffron killeth moths if it be sowed in paper bags verie thin, and laid up in presses amongst tapistrie or appell.”—*Vide HARRISON’s INTRODUCTION TO HOLINSHED’s “CHRONICLES.”*

Autolycus. . . . I must have saffron to colour the warden pies.—*Vide “WINTER’s TALE.”*

“Croaker: One who croaks or grumbles.”—*Vide WEBSTER’s DICTIONARY.*

“Don’t be a croaker.”—*OLD SAYING.*

IN arranging their tables, and preparing their festal halls, the Old English were studious of pictorial effect. Norman love of display was conspicuous in the banqueting-chamber; and long after the French intruders had adopted the Saxon tongue, and been blended with the English race, their modes of exercising hospitality were preserved, even to minute details, by a people jealously reverential of ancient usage. Judged by modern canons,

the mediæval entertainments were deficient in elegance and refinement; but in courtly life they never wanted the particular kinds of splendour and sumptuous brilliancy congenial to feudal taste.

The drapery of the board was abundant, fine, and delicately white; and whilst the walls of the feasting-room were richly draped with tapestries and banners of gaudy silk, the ceiling was adorned with festoons of flowers, after the fashion of the Romans, whose honourable sentiment forbade the guest to blab to the world words spoken indiscreetly “under the rose.” Gentle servitors, men of stately presence, or slight pages with saucy faces and pert tongues, moved to and fro, bravely clad in liveries which the cadet of the noblest houses were proud to wear. Nor was the table devoid of colour and picturesqueness. Every course comprised a fantastic “subtlety,” whose ingeniously contrived figures, typical embellishments, and quaint legend recalled an antique story or enforced a wholesome maxim. The boar’s-head grinned hideously in the middle of the board; or perhaps the place of honour was occupied by a peacock in its plumage. The spaces between the chief dishes offered plates of fruit, or trays of sweetmeats to the idle hand; and as the spectator surveyed the profusely laden board, he could not fail to observe the contrast of the

rich or vivid colours, which culinary artifice had given to the “made dishes.”

Brilliant colourists, the mediæval chefs seized the lessons of the missal-painters, and delighted the eye with chromatic effects, that were equally daring and felicitous. On their subtleties, and other stupendous pieces of confectionery, gilded leaves glowed richly beneath sprays of silver. Some of their “made dishes” were red, others crimson; some were of vermillion brightness, and some of delicate carmine tint. For these hues they were indebted chiefly to red sanders, alkanet, mulberry-juice, and the colouring particles of blood. Throwing in these vivid hues with masterly boldness, they were also prodigal of yellow, from the faintest amber to the deepest orange. It was their favourite colour, and was conspicuous in breads and cakes, pottages and hashes, brewets and twists of pastry. Two-thirds of their dishes were thus enriched to the eye, with the various tints of a dye which they obtained from the bright petals of a delicate flower, whose story, beginning in fable and ending in homeliest prose, is so strange and whimsical as to merit especial notice in the annals of Good Cheer.

When Crocus, the beloved friend of Smilax, fell beneath Mercury’s murderous quoit, the blood which dripped from the wounded boy moistened the turf,

which, after his death, brought forth a bell-shaped blue flower with reddish-yellow stigmata—the Crocus Sativus of botanists. Poetry declared that the lad was changed to a saffron plant. Prose admitted that the flower abounded on the ground where he was said to have received his death-blow. Scepticism remarked that probably the plant had grown there long before the incident, whatever it was, that occasioned the fable. One of the utterers of this sceptical sentiment was an Elizabethan scholar, William Harrison, author of the Introduction to Holinshed's Chronicles, who remarked quaintly, "A certain yong gentleman called Crocus went to playe at coits in the field with Mercurie, and being heedlesse of himselfe, Mercurie's coit happened by mishap to hit him on the head, whereby he received a wound that yer long killed him altogether, to the great discomfort of his friends. Finallie, in the place where he bled, saffron was found to grow, whereupon the people seeing the colour of the chive as it stood, (although I doubt not it grew there long before), adjudged it to come of the blood of Crocus, and therefore they gave it his name."

Attracted by the colour and smell of the three fat chives, "verie red and pleasant to behold," and the fine yellow filaments which glowed at the bottom of the deep blue cup, the ancients observed them carefully. It was found that they were agreeable

to smell and taste,* as well as cheering to the eye. They were supposed to possess medicinal virtues. It was certain that they yielded a pigment serviceable to artists in colour. Henceforth the chives and tendrils were gathered and pressed into yellow cakes, that were sent to distant lands for divers ends. Used as a dye, they gave an orange hue to silk, wool, and linen. Apothecaries administered them to the sick. Cooks put them into their confections. Ladies were indebted to them for the hair-wash which, correcting Nature's error, gave them golden hair. In the Roman cuisine it was used moderately, as the Apician precepts demonstrate, But the "Forme" shows that the cooks of Old

* "What in the ancient use of saffron is most discordant with our present taste, is the employing it as a perfume. Not only were halls, theatres, and courts, through which one wished to diffuse an agreeable smell, strewed with this plant, but it entered into the composition of many spirituous extracts, which retained the same scent; and these costly smelling waters were often made to flow in small streams, which spread about their much admired odour. Luxurious people even moistened or filled with them all those things with which they were most desirous of surprising their guests in an agreeable manner, or with which they ornamented their apartments. From saffron, with the addition of wax and other ingredients, the Greeks as well as the Romans prepared also scented salves, which they used in the same manner as our ancestors their balsams. . . . That saffron was as much employed in seasoning dishes as for a perfume, appears from the oldest work on cookery which has been handed down to us, and which is ascribed to Apicius."—*Vide JOHN BECKMANN'S "HISTORY OF INVENTIONS."*

England were squanderers of the aromatic pigment. Their delight in the colour was a passion—almost a madness. Broths, thick soups, hashes, stews, bread, pastry, fruit-mashes, mortrews, standing-brewets and puddings were all “yellowed” up to lemon-tint or orange-tint with the favourite dye, which was, also, prized as much for its remedial excellence as for its colouring powers.

Esteemed above all other spices,* notwithstanding the comparative mildness of its peculiar flavour, it was the Prince of Herbal Medicaments. It was good for maladies of the breast, lungs, stomach, liver. It was of marvellous efficacy in affections of the eyes, ears, and joints. Taken in potions it purified the blood, and drove blotches and pimples from the skin. Singularly beneficial in all the ailments to which women are especially liable, it was in high request with the fair sex. Bridal cakes were always deeply coloured with it; women with newly-born infants in their arms would drink no fluid that was not tinctured with it; and on “thanksgiving-day,” whilst the young mother ate little but saffron-dyed cake, her gossips consumed whole pounds of the

* The spices of the old English cuisine were cinnamon (never mentioned by Apicius) mace, cloves, galyngale (the long-rooted cyperus), pepper, (from the East Indies *via* Venice and Genoa), ginger, cubebs, cardamours, nutmegs, carraway, and two compound powders, powder-fort and powder-douce, analogous to modern curry-powder. Hence saffron was the mildest of the spices *in taste*.

same virtuous food. Given in liniments, saffron would dissipate tumours; taken in strong drink after an accident it helped the sufferer's fractured bones to re-unite. It had the most contradictory qualities, for it both prevented and provoked drunkenness. Given in proper proportion it deprived wine of its dangerous power over the nerves; but taken indiscretely it put the toper at the mercy of vinous devils. The feaster, who returned sober from a drinking-bout, attributed the steadiness of his legs to his discretion in taking “just the right amount of saffron.” If he were carried home on a stretcher, his misadventure was referred to the “saffron,” instead of the “salmon.” Lastly, saffron was an effectual preservative against the plague. One of the shrewdest medical practitioners of Queen Elizabeth's London—John Gerarde, the laborious naturalist and author of the famous “Herbal”—gravely advises his readers that, in seasons of pestilence, they should arm themselves against the plague by taking twelve two-hundred-and-forty-sevenths of a single grain of saffron every morning before breaking their fast.* At the time when the

* Gerarde says, “The weight of *ten graines* of saffron, the kernels of walnuts, two ounces, figs, two ounces, mithridate, one drachm, and a few sage leaves stampt with a sufficient quantity of Pimpernell water, and made into a masse or lumpe, and kept in a glasse for your use, and thereof *twelve graines*, given in the morning fasting, preserveth from pestilence and expelleth it from those that are

learned man gave this marvellous prescription, saffron was still so largely used in cookery that a luxurious feaster often consumed as much as a drachm, or even two drachms, of the yellow paint in four-and-twenty hours. From Gerard's recipe, homœopaths may see that Hahnemann was not the first doctor to recommend *infinitesimal* doses.

Uncertainty covers the first introduction of the Crocus Sativus to English soil. On the strength of a pleasant tradition that has survived the culture of the plant in Essex, Hackluyt tells that the first bulb was brought to this country by a patriotic pilgrim, who, wishing to enrich his native land with the plant of the spice, hitherto imported only in cakes at great cost, hid the treasure in his palmer's staff, and so conveyed it to Britain. The name of the pious traveller, who thus eluded the vigilance of the police of an unrecorded mediæval custom-house, and thereby destroyed a lucrative monopoly of Eastern merchants, has not come to us with the story of his achievement. It is thus that history often neglects the *men* whose *deeds* are famous.

Anyhow, the bulb was planted and the flower infected." If we put the "few sage leaves" at the weight of an ounce, the entire confection would weigh five ounces one drachm, and ten grains; of which only ten grains were of saffron stigmata!

raised in Essex during the third Edward's reign; and it is probable that Richard the Second's cooks looked to the growers of that county for the greater part of their supply of the yellow spice which they used so lavishly. It was grown at an early date in Gloucestershire, and other parts of the West country. But, though some of the Elizabethan dealers in the commodity thought the saffron of the Western shires superior to that grown in the Eastern counties, and would even buy it at a slightly higher price than Essex saffron, East Anglia continued to the close of the seventeenth century to have larger crocus-grounds than any other part of the kingdom. Walden, on the Essex border, was for centuries the principal seat of the crocus-trade, from which it derived its distinguishing name of Saffron-Walden, long before Thomas, Earl of Norfolk built Audley End in that parish, in honour of his maternal grandfather, Lord Chancellor Audley (the pliant keeper of Henry the Eighth's elastic conscience), who there made his rural home on lands which he acquired from the king on the dissolution of Walden Abbey. The arms of the borough, "Three saffron flowers walled in," commemorate its ancient connection with the trade that, after enriching it for centuries, disappeared altogether at the close of the last century.

More than all other kinds of farming, the culture of saffron was laborious, costly, and perilous. The bulbs, in Elizabeth's time, cost in fairly plentiful years only two and eightpence a coomb ; but in scarce seasons, when wet had rotted, or heat had parched the underground "stock," the farmer had to pay from eight to ten shillings per quarter for every twenty quarters of heads that were requisite for the planting of a single acre. To prepare the soil for his bulbs, the farmer had to manure it with thirty loads per acre of good dung ; and the ground, even when so enriched, would not sustain the delicate and devouring growth for more than three successive years. It was true the soil was still capable of yielding barley for many years without more compost, after the removal of the bulbs ; but the cost of the preparatory manuring was a heavy expense. Labour demanded further outlay. Every year the bulbs were raised in July, relieved of "rosse and filth," and carefully reset in rows before the later part of August. Each rank or row had to be covered and earthed up with fine mould. In September the ground was carefully weeded, so that "nothing might annoy the flower" when its head appeared above the earth. What with wages for stoning, payments for dunging, wages for raising and re-setting, and wages for weeding, the grower of the dainty plant was always putting his

hand into his pocket, and paying away money which he might never recover.

When at length the blue flowers smiled in long straight lines over the carefully gardened ground, the farmer's time of keenest anxiety and most urgent peril began. A heavy fall of rain might so batter and drench the delicate crop, and blend the blue dye of the petals with the yellow of the stigmata, that a whole acre would not yield him a single packet of marketable chives. Even fine rain would injure the stigmata, so as to make the crop of inferior quality. A strong gale of wind was no less hurtful than untimely showers. The time for picking the flowers and removing the chives, together with their filaments, having come, the grower was again compelled to pay wages in money or kind. By paying in money he parted with what he loved. If he paid the pickers with a proportion of gathered chives, he parted with material that a turn of the market might raise in a trice to three times the sum of wages rendered in coin. He could not dally and trifle with time—nor could he accomplish the task with only a few hands. It was necessary to gather the fresh blossoms when the morning dew was upon them, and before the sun of “St. Luke's little summer” had “caused them to welke and fitter.” The flowers having been plucked, and the “yellows” separated from the worthless blue

petals, the next operation was to dry the chives and filaments by placing them on trays of strained canvas over a gentle fire. When dried, the chives were heaped together, pressed into cakes by means of weights, and put into bags for sale.

In "good times" the cakes sold for a price that nobly rewarded the grower, who had been so fortunate as to gather a large crop in fine condition. But for times to be good to a crocus-grower, it was necessary that they should be bad to his neighbour. Whilst his own harvest was abundant, he required that the general yield of the saffron-gardens should be deficient. Unless the general supply was defective, the owner of a large stock was compelled to sell it in a glutted market at a low rate. In which case, notwithstanding his high farming, and his vigilance, and his good fortune in escaping rain, and his cleverness in seizing the proper mornings for picking, he found himself even poorer than he would have been with an ordinary yield, after a generally deficient harvest.

Something was always less than quite fortunate with the saffron-farmers, or "crokers," as they were generally designated from their special growth. The bulbs rotted in the ground; or the wind caught the blossoms and injured the chives; or the show of yellows was deficient in quantity, colour, brightness, or fragrancy; or rain utterly destroyed the

whole produce of a ground, from which the “croker” had hoped to net a hundred pounds; or the harvest was everywhere so ruinously plentiful, that instead of rating from twenty to thirty shillings a-pound, new saffron, of the finest quality, was quoted at ten and twelve shillings.

It is not wonderful that a croker seldom wore a cheerful face. All farmers were grumblers, but the croker surpassed them all in querulous dissatisfaction. Other farmers were sometimes heard to admit that times might be worse, and that they might have more reason for complaint. But the “crokers” were always in the worst of hard times. They were incessant, unvarying, blasphemous grumblers. In an early year of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, they surpassed themselves in grumbling at the prodigious yield of their commodity, which had been so enormous that they paid the pickers half the crop for their trouble. Soon the pickers brought their earnings into Walden market, and were competing with the “crokers.” Saffron was “a drug in the market” in two senses. Merchants could buy any amount of it for next to nothing; and in their annoyance the “crokers” railed impiously at the Providence who had been so much too munificent. The exact terms in which the impious “crokers” vented their rage at Saffron Walden market are on record, but they are too grossly irreverent for repro-

duction on this page. Social sentiment declared against the “crokers,” who were henceforth denounced as hateful examples of wicked discontent. Their impiety became proverbial, and farmers, in other departments of agriculture, checked one another for querulous dissatisfaction, by saying, “Come, come, man, don’t be a ‘croker.’ It is enough for you to be a ‘grumbler.’” The term passed quickly from folk-lore to literature; and when its origin had been lost sight of, the word was confounded by writers and dictionary-makers with a word of Saxon derivation. Webster and Richardson, *cum multis aliis* of their tribe, misspell “croker,” and refer it to the same root as the “croaking” of a frog.

There was no trade more abounding in fraud and trickery than the saffron trade. The Elizabethan crokers used to dry the chives on greased papers, and put butter on the cakes of compressed stigmata, in order to give them a delusive brightness of colour. They used also to adulterate the genuine article with “scraped brazell and the floure of the Sonchus, which,” says William Harrison, “cometh somewhat neere indeede to the hue of saffron (if it be gathered late), but it is soon betwraied both by the depth of the colour and the hardness.” The presence of butter in a sample could be detected by the nice judge of the article; but the young and in-

experienced dealer was often imposed upon by the effects of grease.

Whilst the crokers were knavish grumblers, the saffron merchants—*i.e.* the dealers who bought the commodity of the farmers—were notable for the weakness and inflammatory state of their eyes, which suffered greatly from constant exposure to the irritating fumes of the spice. In their shops they usually defended their eyes with large leather-rimmed spectacles; and to save themselves from inhaling the irritating vapour too freely, they “muffled themselves as women doo when they ride.”

Surviving the Roman, or spoon-period, of English cookery, the culinary use of saffron prevailed in the earlier generations of the cuisine, which resulted from the introduction of the fork. Medical prejudice and jealousy retained it in the kitchen long after the general gust for its flavour had been weakened by the growing preference for the natural flavours of boiled and roasted meats served in “joints.” Throughout the seventeenth century, saffron held its ground as a condiment and colouring ingredient in food; and in years of scarcity it was sold at astoundingly high prices. For instance, in one year of James the First’s reign, it was ordinarily sold at £3. 3s. 4d. per pound, a rate exceeded in Charles the Second’s time, when a pound of the best chives

fetched no less than £4 1s. 10d.,* an amazing price to those who bear in mind the value of money in the seventeenth century. Perhaps there is no article of fantastic luxury on which more money has been squandered than on saffron, at the order of fashion, morbid taste, and medical empiricism.

Whilst saffron was still used by the cooks of the seventeenth century, dyers and laundresses employed it as a colouring agent. It gave to silks the rich amber hue that was in vogue with the ladies of Anne of Denmark's court; and it was put into the starch that afforded stiffness and colour to the *yellow* bands and cuffs, which James the First detested almost as vehemently as tobacco-smoke. In the days of Solomon Stuart, society divided itself into two parties, and fought smartly about yellow-starched ruffs and laces. Whilst the one party insisted that red, blue, and purple dyes gave the

* Lord Braybrooke gives the following examples of the fluctuations of the saffron market:—

Prices of a pound of Saffron.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
1548 . . . 0 12 0				1653 . . . 1 17 0			
1561 . . . 1 5 0				1664 . . . 3 10 0			
1614 . . . 3 3 4				1665 . . . 4 1 10			
1631 . . . 0 18 0				1689 . . . 3 0 0			
1647 . . . 1 2 0				1717 . . . 1 6 6			

Vide—Lord Braybrooke's "HISTORY OF AUDLEY END." From Harrison we learn that the ordinary price of saffron in Queen Elizabeth's London was twenty shillings a-pound.

proper tints to such articles of costume, the other party declared as passionately in favour of yellow. But it was not in the power of the king's friends, who called yellow bands unclean, and the Puritans, who called them wicked, to put the new starch out of fashion. By wearing a yellow ruff at Tyburn, on the occasion of her execution for her part in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, Mrs. Turner threw a transient discredit on lemon-tinted lawn and lace, just as Mrs. Manning, the murdereress of Victorian London, put black satin into disgrace for a season or two by mounting the scaffold in a robe of that material. But the champions of saffron soon regained their spirits. They only laughed contemptuously, and heightened the yellow of their starch, when, to put them to shame, it was ordered that the London hangman should wear on "hanging days" a yellow plume in his hat, and a yellow band round his neck.

The culinary use of saffron died very gradually. Indeed, even now it can scarcely be said to be extinct. In some of our counties dairywomen still colour butter with it. Cheese also, in some districts, is tinged with crocus chives. The same may be said of the richly yellowed batter-puddings set on farmers' tables in the West of England, where saffron-bread and saffron-cake may still be seen. The large buns of Refreshment Room cookery,

which are so much richer to the eye than the palate, derive their “eggy look” from a discreet and delusive use of the ancient dye. Following in the wake of the cooks, our doctors relinquished the use of saffron, as a remedial agent, in the earlier years of the present century. Though it retains a place in the most recent and scientific of our pharmacopœias, physicians never prescribe it for strictly medicinal ends, and apothecaries use it only for colouring purposes. For the same object it is used by the knavish bird-sellers of our London streets, who are clever at changing house-sparrows into canary-birds by means of the dye.

Saffron is, of course, largely used in the artistic industries; but manufacturers and craftsmen procure their needful supplies of it from foreign countries. Relinquished in Essex at the close of the last century, the culture of the *Crocus Sativus* for commercial purposes may be said to have disappeared from England; though here and there, in the old saffron districts, cottage-gardeners may still produce a few chives for a strictly local market. Having ceased to be saffron-growers, why should not English farmers cease to be “crokers?”

CHAPTER VII.

DEATH IN THE POT, AND DISH-COVERS.

Tastyngē and credence longethe to blode and birth royalle,
 As pope, emperours, emperatrice, and cardynalle,
 Kynge, queene, prince archebischoppe in palle,
 Duke, erle, and no mo, þat y to remembrancē calle.

“ Credence is used and tastyngē, for drede of poysenyngē,
 To alle officers y-sworne, and grete othe by chargynge,
 Therfore eche man in office kepe his rome sewer, closynge
 Cloos howse, chest, and gardeuyan, for drede of congettynge.

“ Steward and Chamburlayne of a prince of royalte,
 They have, knowledge of homages, seruice and fewte ;
 So þey have ouersight of euery office, after þeire degree,
 By wrytyngē þe knowleche and þe credence to ouerse.

“ Therefore in makynge of his credence, it is to drede, y sey,
 To mershalle, sewer, and kervere þey must allowt alwey,
 To teche hym of his office, þe credence hym to prey ;
 Thus shalle he not stand in makynge of his credence in no fray,”

JOHN RUSSELL's “ BOKE OF NURTURE.”

HEROIC lives are hourly at the mercy of the meanest agents. The valet may any night steal up to his lord, and send him to the next world with a murderous blow. The barber, to whom the king bares his throat, may any morning put another sovereign on his throne. A familiar story records how Charles the Second was abruptly reminded of this unpleasant truth by a teacher who, for the lesson, received instant dismissal from the royal

service. “Go, man; you shall never shave me again. It is treason to imagine such a thing,” exclaimed the “Saviour of Society” in the seventeenth century, to the poor fool who had only meant to be funny. Charles, King of England by the Grace of God, would have treated in the same manner any confidential and too communicative chef who had reminded him that it was easy for a malicious cook to season a monarch’s broth with arsenic.

Fortunately for their peace of mind, and their power to enjoy the good things of this life, epicures are seldom troubled with ghastly suspicions of their cooks’ sanity and good faith. Taking their soup trustfully, they presume that the *entrées* are “all right,” or at least not murderously wrong. And so it is with inferior mortals, who eat their bread thankfully, and in a sure belief that it contains no worse poison than alum; but every now and then an incident, followed by a Coroner’s inquest, gives a rude shock to this universal confidence. Gentlemen sometimes die suddenly after eating mortal *fungi*, mistaken for wholesome mushrooms by a careless cook. Death may lurk in the dish prepared by a culinary misanthropist, or in a bowl of milk from a “model dairy.” Ugly stories could be told of chocolate cakes enriched with strychnine, and sweetmeats painted with arsenical green. To

gather such tales of horror, one has not to go back to the days and doings of Maria Margaret, Marchioness of Brinvilliers, or rake from anecdotal dustheaps the worst charges against Emma Hamilton. A year or two since, the diminutive nurse-girl of a lowly London household amused herself with sprinkling poison on the bread-and-butter given to the children of whom she had care. And just about the same time, murderous lozenges were thrown broadcast about the Brighton streets by a foolish woman, who just escaped death on the gallows because society shrunk from hanging a lady with a Parisian bonnet and seal-skin mantle.

A man should not be too thoughtful for his health when he is satisfying his hunger. "Everything agrees with you until it has disagreed with you," Abernethy remarked to the valetudinarian who troubled himself overmuch as to what he should eat, drink and avoid. The *malade imaginaire*, who creates dyspepsia for himself out of nervous fancies about his food, should take the surgeon's counsel to heart. Whilst dishes are usually wholesome to the eater who takes their wholesomeness for granted, the best fare is apt to avenge itself on the man who regards it with suspicion. Enjoyment is impossible at the dinner-table without proper confidence in the caterer and cook; and the man with a mischievous

habit of mistrusting them has travelled some way on the road that leads to the hell of hypochondria and ends in madness.

Of all monomaniacs, there are none more truly pitiable than the few wretched people who sniff poison in every culinary savour, and fear death from a sauce. Charles of Brunswick had said farewell to pleasure, as well as to virtue and decency, when, from dread of assassination, he would not taste the daintiest mess unless it had been prepared by his particular chef, and was set before him in a locked plate which none but himself and the supreme artiste could open. What gratification could the broken and fantastic voluptuary derive from his fabulous wealth, when, living only for this life, he had persuaded himself that his existence depended on the fidelity of the only servant whom he could trust to cook his food? Sustained by the imaginations of a guilty conscience, and aggravated by memories of deeds which had made him an object of mortal hatred to the victims of his wicked passions, the ex-duke's cowardly fear of poison had its origin in the morbid fastidiousness and timorous curiosity that often dominate the failing appetites of jaded epicures.

But ghastly experience forbade the potentates of mediæval Europe to feast without fear at any board where appetite met them. The preacher might

urge them in sacred language to take no thought for life ; but the poisoner, by acts more impressive than holy words, taught them to be apprehensive of sudden death. Poison was the favourite instrument of ambition and vengeance in olden time. The old story on which Shakespeare founded his noblest tragedy was told at every fireside of feudal Europe ; and wherever repeated, it stirred the minds of hearers who could parallel its grand crime with a deed of stealthy murder done near their own homes. Every castle had its tale of poisoning. The annals of every princely house covered traditions which justified the precautions taken daily under every chieftain's roof against the treachery of cooks and servers, carvers and cup-bearers. The lord of olden time was taught by his own domestic story, that death might come to him at any moment from poison put in meat or drink, from poison in bread or salt, from poison in sauce or sweet-meat. And to guard against such peril, arising from the anger of vindictive vassals, or the designs of pretenders to his throne, he had recourse to measures which are dismally significant of ceaseless dread and incessant treachery.

The fidelity of an agent must be purchased with a price something in excess of any payment that is likely to be offered for his treachery. This principle is daily recognized by men of business in “the

City," where confidential servants with large opportunities for theft are paid highly, in order that they may be honest. Of course out of proper regard for their feelings, it is always assumed that "judgment" and "experience" are the qualities so liberally remunerated. On several grounds it would be unwise to impress on a chief cashier or secretary that his large payment, for work which a simpleton could do, was an arrangement to restrain him from arrant roguery. But courteous phrases do not blind the cashier and his paymaster to the real purpose of the munificence.

The same principle was daily recognized and acted upon by men of chivalry in feudal England. In proportion as he was likely to be bribed to poison his lord, the cook was paid lavishly. The sovereign of Norman England placed over his household a courtier who had a strong, selfish interest in keeping him alive. Usually a man of noble lineage, the Steward of the Royal Household was gratified with princely bounties, and encouraged with princely promises. He was thus taught to feel that under any circumstances he would be a great loser by his master's death. The steward's subordinate officers, especially those who held chief places in the kitchen or approached the royal person at festal moments, were appointed from the same consideration, and paid with the same prudent prodigality. The

Larderarius, always a gentleman, often a sacred personage, ranked with folk of courtly degree. If a layman, he might hope for a traitor's forfeited estate in reward for his vigilance over the larder. If in holy orders, he looked to a bishopric as a probable guerdon of his services. The Dapifer had even more splendid hopes from the faithful performance of duties now-a-days contemned as servile. The chef, a man of noble ancestry and of science, according to the scientific light and darkness of the time, seldom retired from the office of "Coquus Dominicæ Coquinæ," without a grant of lands that fixed him and heirs amongst the territorial magnates of a shire. The explanation of the curious tenures requiring the holders of certain lands to perform, or be ready to perform, culinary service for the sovereign's comfort,* must be sought

* "The Norman Conqueror William bestowed several portions of land on these highly favoured domestics, the 'Coquorum Præpositus,' and the 'Coquus Regius.' A manor was bestowed on Robert Argyllon, the 'Grand Queux,' to be held by the service of making one mess in an earthen pot in the kitchen of our Lord the King, on the day of his Coronation, called 'De la Groute,' i.e., a kind of plum-porridge, or water-gruel with plums in it. This dish is still served up at the Royal Table at coronations, by the lord of the said Manor of Addington. At the Coronation of George IV., Court of Claims, July 12, 1820, the petition of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which was presented by Sir G. Nayler, claiming to perform the service of presenting a dish De la Groute to the king at the banquet, was considered by the Court, and allowed."—*Vide DR KITCHINER'S "Cook's Oracle."*

in the usages of time when cooks at court were gentlemen who rose to wealth and dignities in the ordinary course of professional service.

One often hears indignant language about the exorbitant wages paid at the present time to their cooks by great men, who are far from liberal to their children's tutors and governesses. But it is certain that cooks of the highest rank are paid far less liberally in modern, than they were in strictly feudal England. Now-a-days, a prince's chef gets a salary of some £300 per annum, together with a few trumpery perquisites, and the use of a dog-cart. In Norman England he had a salary equal to ten times that amount of modern money, a large quantity of lucrative patronage, and the prospect of a noble gift of lands. As life grew more secure, the chef's fees became fewer and smaller. In proportion as his opportunities for murder, and his temptations to turn poisoner diminished in number and force, he lost power over his patron's purse. He may still be paid above the dignity of his labour; but the time has long passed when he was rewarded with a munificence that caused gentlemen of quality to enter the culinary profession.

Wherever he went, a feudal potentate of the higher degrees was attended by his cook. At whatever table he sat, the dishes of which he partook were prepared by the officer who was at the same time

his *chef de cuisine* and body-guard. The same fashion still prevails in the East, where princes are taught by experience to regard their most complaisant entertainers with suspicion. Bringing with him nobles, whom he could not have safely left at Teheran during his long absence from the seat of government, the Shah of Persia was accompanied on his Western tour by cooks in whose loyalty he could confide. The same retinue, whose splendour was heightened by courtiers tainted with disaffection, comprised a staff of culinary artistes whose vigilance gave Nasr-ul-Deen a sense of security from poison.

Six hundred years since, when he visited Oxford on a perilous mission, Cardinal Otho provided for his safety by retaining a cook, who was not more firmly attached to him by interest than by natural affection. Originating in the voluntary association of a few schoolmasters, the guild of teachers had become a populous and famous university, when Gregory the Ninth's legate approached it with a purpose agreeable to the policy of the academic friars and monks, but highly displeasing to the academic seculars and laity. "Universitas" was divided just then into two great parties that had for years been striving for the superiority. The one party consisted of the favourers of papal pretension, who, in their desire to dominate in the

schools and even exclude the ancient laical element of the community, welcomed the sacred envoy with significant enthusiasm. The other and more numerous party, consisting of seculars and laics, in their hatred of the friars, and their jealousy of Rome, denounced the legate as a hostile intruder. Otho saw his danger, and prudently appointed his own brother to the important office of *chef de cuisine* to the embassy. The object of this appointment is specially stated by Matthew Paris, the contemporary chronicler, who says that the envoy's kinsman was selected for the post, "ne procuraretur aliquid venenorum, quod nimis timebat legatus." Otho had scarcely taken up his quarters at Oseney Abbey, when his opponents marched out from Oxford to the religious house with a show of anger and force, that, belying their peaceable professions, quickened the legate's fear, and justified him in refusing to give them an interview. In the ensuing conflict which afforded a momentary advantage to the turbulent scholars, and sent Otho flying to Abingdon, the chef was killed whilst courageously covering his brother's retreat from the studious mob. Whilst the cook's martial zeal points to the two-fold nature of his office, his fate is significant of the view which the assailants took of his functions. Thirsting for the legate's life, the Welshman who shot the fatal arrow felt that he would do much for the

accomplishment of his purpose by killing the envoy's culinary protector. The chef having been put out of the way, another cook might be induced to poison the Cardinal.

But when the mediæval prince had placed loyal adherents in the chief offices of his kitchen, larder, pantry, and buttery, and had provided for their continuance in fidelity, by assigning them liberal salaries, he had only taken the first general precautions against poisoners. It still remained for him to direct the Marshal of his household to keep a vigilant eye on the highly paid retainers, and yet further to lessen the chances of poisonous misadventure by a nice and daily observance of the "rules of the assay." By these numerous and cleverly devised rules, every principal servant, concerned in the preparation or serving of meat and drink, was placed under the suspicious observation of another ministrant. It is needful that the reader should pay particular attention to the practices of "assay," "credence," or "tasting," as they were indifferently termed, in order that he may realize the degree in which the fear of death from the pot prevailed in feudal society, and may also appreciate the pains taken to defeat poisoners.

The great man's table was never spread without a strict observance of these practices, which had for their object that he should eat of no dish and drink

of no draught that had not been previously tested by official tasters. When the cloth had been laid by subordinate servants, it devolved on some chief officer of the household—the chief sewer, the captain of the yeomen, the dapifer, or the marshal himself—to see that every article on the table was free from poison. The bread, cut for the great man's mouth, was tested thus. In the presence of the “taker of the assay,” the chief officer of the pantry, kneeling at the table, ate a piece of the bread, which the carver cut from the prepared pieces. At the same time he partook of the salt in the lord's salt-cellar. To ascertain that no poison lurked in the water in which the lord would wash his hands, the yeoman or server who placed the basin on the board was required to drink some of the fluid in the presence of the assaying officer. In like manner every spoon, knife, or napkin put on the table was kissed by a responsible servant, who thereby certified to the officer of assay that no murderous powder had been sprinkled on the linen, that no poisonous unguent had been treacherously applied to spoon or knife. These last named implements were burnished brightly, out of regard for the lord's peace of mind no less than for the mere pleasure of his eye. If a spoon or knife were dull, he was quick to suspect that it was smeared with poison.

All these precautions having been taken against the presence of poison in the furniture of the table, the salt-dish was *covered* with its lid, and the bread was *covered* with its napkin. A fair white pallium, the surnappe, was then raised by special officers, and put with much ceremony over the whole table. Of course the several processes of this preliminary assay were not performed without much bowing, kneeling, kissing, and foot-scraping by the gentle servitors.* The white coverlet having fallen over

* Of the formalities observed at the laying of the royal table in Greenwich Palace, during Queen Elizabeth's reign, Paul Hentzner gives the following account in the Itinerarium, freely Englished by Horace Walpole: "A gentleman entered the room bearing a rod, and along with him another who had a table-cloth, which, after they had both kneeled three times, with the utmost veneration, he spread upon the table, and after kneeling again, they both retired. Then came two others, one with the rod again, the other with a salt-cellar, a plate, and bread; when they had kneeled, as the others had done, and placed what was brought upon the table, they too retired, with the same ceremonies performed by the first. At last came an unmarried lady, (we were told she was a Countess), and along with her a married one, bearing a *tasting-knife*; the former was dressed in white silk, who, when she had prostrated herself three times, in the most graceful manner, approached the table, and rubbed the plates with bread and salt, with as much care as if the Queen had been present; when they had waited there a little time, the Yeomen of the Guard entered bare-headed, cloathed in scarlet with a golden rose upon their backs, bringing in at each turn, a course of twenty-four dishes, served in plate, most of it gilt; these dishes were received by a gentleman in the same order they were brought, and placed upon the table, while the lady-taster

the board, no one but the chief sewer or yeoman might raise it; and even he might not presume to do so until the moment came for its ceremonious removal in the presence of the lord himself, or one of the supreme officers of the household. No serving-man could prematurely or impertinently touch the sur-cloth and escape suspicion of treason. The page caught with his hand under the white drapery, was sure of a terrible flogging for his officiousness. In troublous times he seldom escaped with so light a punishment. To prove that any meddling varlet, after the falling of the surnappe, had touched the *covered* salt or *covered* bread, was to compass his quick dismissal to the hangman.

The time for “serving the meats” having come, the chief sewer, or other officer of the assay, went to the kitchen dresser, and tested the loyalty of the steward and cook. Having cut a cornet of bread,

gave to each guard a mouthful to eat, for fear of poison. During the time that this guard, which consists of the tallest and stoutest men that can be found in all England, being carefully selected for this service, were bringing dinner, twelve trumpets and two kettle-drums made the hall ring for half an hour together. At the end of all this ceremonial, a number of unmarried ladies appeared, who with particular solemnity lifted the meat off the table, and conveyed it into the Queen’s inner and more private chamber, where after she had chosen for herself, the rest goes to the ladies of the court. The Queen sups and dines alone with very few attendants, and it is very seldom anybody, foreigner or native, is admitted at that time, and then only at the intercession of some one in power.”

he touched the first dish with it in three places, and then saw the steward and chef eat it. With a fresh cornet for each dish of soup, porridge, hotch-pot, or other mess containing much liquor, he repeated this ceremony again and again, until he had seen the cook and steward eat as many triangular pieces of bread as there were dishes of fluid compounds for the lord's table. Each cornet was dipped thrice in the dish under assay ; and the sewer flourished it thrice over his head before putting it to the lips of the two chief officers of the kitchen. Together with each cornet, the steward and cook were required to eat a piece of the meat of the dish in which it had been dipped. A morsel from each of the substantial viands was given to both of them, so that they ate of every “stew,” “roast,” “boil,” “broil,” “made dish,” “porridge,” or “sauce” that passed from their dresser. The same precautions were taken with the closed pies, each of which was opened, in order that its two responsible makers should eat of it. Every preparation, from the soups to the sweetmeats, from the brawn to the jellies, was tested with the same formality. Not a *single eatable thing** left the kitchen dresser until it had been assayed.

* “In the mean tyme the server goeth to the dresser, and there taketh assay of every dyshe, and doth geve it to the stewarde and the cooke to eat of all porreges, mustards, and other sauces. He

As soon as it had been duly assayed, each dish was *covered*, and put into the hands of the servitor, whose duty it was to bear it to the table. It should be particularly observed that each dish, whether hot or cold, was *covered*. The bearer was bound to carry it directly to the banqueting-room. Even though the metal dish burnt his hands, he might not set it down for a moment. To stop on his way was to expose himself to suspicion of tampering with the dish. If he ventured to raise the cover, the worst construction was put upon the act, for the *cover* of a hot dish was used to keep out poison, rather than to keep in heat. In the case of a cold dish, the only use of the *cover* was to guard its contents against poisoners. So that the heat of a silver dish, containing a hot mess, might not trouble him in the performance of his duty, the bearer, a gentle servant, *sworn*, like his official superiors, to do his work

taketh assay with cornetts of trencher bread of his own cuttyng, and that is thus: He taketh a cornet of bread in his hande, and toucheth three parts of the dishe, and maketh a floryshe over it, and giveth it to the aforenamed persons to eate, and of every stewed meate, rosted, boylde, or broyled, beyng fyshe or fleshe, he cutteth a little thereof, &c. And yf it be baked meat close, unclose it, and take assaye thereof, as ye do of sawces, and that is with cornetts of breade, and so with all other meates, as custards, tartes, gelly, with other such lyke. The ministers of the churche doth after the olde custome, in syngynge of some proper or godly caroll."—*Vide* THE INTHRONIZATION OF ARCHBISHOP NEVILL. *Temp. EDWARD THE FOURTH.*

faithfully, would guard his hands with a layer of crumbs of bread, taking care to hold the bread so that it was not visible. Sewers are particularly instructed on this last point in one of the most noteworthy passages of the “Boke of Curtasye* (A.D. 1430—40.)

As each dish was brought to the table, it was again tasted by an officer of assay, in the presence of the august persons who eventually consumed it. The marshal, the chief sewer, and the carver having made solemn reverences to the high table, and taken proper positions before it, each act of the grand assay before the table was performed ceremoniously, whilst grace and carols were chanted. The marshal standing, the sewer on his knees, received from the carver a succession of cornets dipped in the fluid

* The Author of “The Boke of Curtasye” says,

“ This wyle þo squyer to kechyn shall go,
And brynges a bof for assay þo;
Tho Coke assayes þe mete ungrist,
Tho sewer he takes and kouers on ryȝt;
Wo so euer he takes þat mete to bere,
Schalle not so hardy þo couerture rere,
For cold ne hote, I warne you alle,
For suspecyon of treason as may befalle.
Yf þo syluer dysshe wylle algate brenne,
A sotelté I wylle þe kenne,
Take þe bredde coruyn and lay by-twene,
And kepe þe welle hit be not sene;
I teche hit for no curtayse,
But for þyn ese.

Vide, “THE BOKE OF CURTASYE.”

preparations, and pieces of meat cut from the other viands, just as the steward and cook had been shortly before fed by the sewer from each dish at the kitchen dresser. When the sewer knelt the dish-bearer knelt, and when the sewer rose from his knee the bearer stood erect. Having removed the cover, which had been put on the dish in the kitchen, the carver, duly dipping and flourishing each cornet of bread, fed the sewer with the compound which he had sent to the hall. At the same time the carver gave a dipped cornet or testing-piece of the viand to the dish-bearer ; so that if the server had sent, or the bearer carried, a poisoned dish, he would suffer for it rightly under the eyes of his lord. No dish passed from the bearer's hands to the table until it had been so assayed on the persons of bearer and sewer.* The dishes

* Then the marshall standeth stylle, and the sewer kneeleth on his knee besydes the carver, who receaveth every dyshe in course of kynde, and uncovereth them. Then the carver of all potages and sauces taketh assay with a cornet of trencher bread of his owne cutting, he toucheth three partes of the dishe, and maketh a flourishe over it, and geveth it to the sewer, and to the bearer of the dyshe; and yf it be any maner of fowle, take the assaye thereof at the outsyde of the thygh or wyng; and yf it be any baked meat, that is closed, uncover hym, and take assays therof with cornettes dypt into the gravy, and geve it to the sewer, ut supra. And of all custardes, tartes, march-paynes, or gelly take assay with cornetts. And of all subtleties or leches, with your brode knyfe a litle of, and geve it to the sewer and bearer, ut supra."—*Vide, "THE INTHRONIZATION OF ARCHBISHOP NEVILL."*

having been thus “assayed” by “tasting,” they became “dishes of credence,” i.e., the lord might trust them as fit for his diet.

But the usages of the assay were not over when the board was at length covered with dishes. The fish and flesh having been served, the *cover* was taken from the salt, which was forthwith tested by the chief panter in his lord’s presence.

Every cup of drink served to the great man was in like manner assayed twice, once in the buttery and again in the hall. In the buttery the butler was required to drink, under the marshal’s eye, some of every vessel of liquor sent to the high table; and at the same place the marshal *covered* with its lid every cup, before committing it to the lord’s cup-bearer. It was treason for a cup-bearer to raise the lid of a vessel thus confided to him, on his way from the buttery to the table; but a sip of liquor came to his lips before his lord took a draught. On serving his master the cup-bearer knelt, removed the lid, and then poured a little of the drink into the inverted cover.* When he had

* * In the mean tyme the marshall goeth to the buttery, to see the covered cup be right served, and geueth to the butler his assay, and delyvereth to the cup-bearer the cup of estate, and when the cup-bearer commeth to the table, after his obeysaunce, he kneeleth on his knee, and putteth foorth three or four dropes of ale into the insyde of the cover of the cuppe, and suppes it of for his assaye Then he settes the cup besydes the Lord and covereth it, and then

drunk the liquor from the the lid, which became for the moment a drinking-cup, the servant handed the cup of estate to his master, who, on seeing the liquor thus tasted, and assayed under his eyes, accepted it as a liquor of "credence," which he might drink trustfully.

At the conclusion of the meal, the assayed surnappe was ceremoniously drawn over the high table, and napkins were given to the lord and his chief guests by ministrants, who kissed the linen, to signify its freedom from poison. Having washed their hands and lips in assayed water, and dried them on the assayed cloths, the potentate and his friends retired from the banqueting-room.

It is obvious that several minutes were occupied by the usages of assay; but whilst their observance afforded abundant time for the orderly setting out

all the Table is served with Ale."—*Vide, "THE INTHRONIZATION OF ARCHBISHOP NEVILL."*

" As oft as þe kerver fettys drynke,
 The butler assayès hit how good hym thynke,
 In þe lordys cupp þat lenys undrynen,
 Into þe almesdisse hit schalle be souken,
 The kerver anon with-outen thouzt,
 Unkouers þe cup þat he have brouȝt;
 Into þe couertoure wyn he powres out,
 Or into a spare pece, withouten doute;
 Assayes, an gefes þe lords to drynke,
 Or setles hit doun as hym goode thynke."

Vide, "THE BOKE OF CURTASYE."

of the numerous dishes of the several courses, measures were taken to render the unavoidable delay as little irksome as possible to the feasters. Whilst the dishes of the first course were being assayed, the clerks sung an elaborate grace, or after "the olde custome," chanted "some proper and Godly caroll." Music of the same kind diverted the guests, whilst the dishes of the second and third courses were submitted to "the tasting." And, doubtless, the jester seized his opportunity for throwing out saucy speeches, and provoking laughter during these pauses in the pleasures of the table.

Whilst these precautions against murder were taken at every meal by personages of high estate, men of low degree ate the porridge without dread. But it is uncertain at what social line the usages of the assay were neglected. John Russell, indeed, in the "Boke of Nurture," declares that "credence" pertained to no person, whose dignity was beneath that of an earl; a statement implying that, at least in Russell's opinion, the territorial lord was guilty of ludicrous presumption and a heinous offence against etiquette, who, being lower than an earl, required the viands of his peculiar table to be submitted to the assay. But remembering the pleasure which people of the inferior degrees of gentility find in copying the fashions of their social

bettors, the reader will doubtless think it probable that, in the absence of an express law forbidding the assay at the tables of the lower quality, “credence” was commonly practised in the kitchens and banqueting-rooms of manorial seigniors and simple knights, whose wealth was more considerable than their heraldic distinctions. Russell, be it remembered, was the chamberlain and marshal of the good Duke Humphrey, of Gloucester, who was in his day a superbly lavish entertainer, though his name has long since passed into a proverbial pleasantry which, commemorating in olden time his princely munificence to scholars, has in these later generations been generally misconstrued to the discredit of his hospitality. As the chamberlain and major-domo of “A kynge’s sone, uncle to the kynge,” it is probable that John Russell “drew the line” beneath which “credence” could not be rightly observed, much higher in the table of precedence than it would have been drawn by the chief servitor of many a “right worthy knight.”

Anyhow, the usages of the assay were ceremoniously performed, after the fashions set forth, in all the princely and greatly noble houses of mediæval England. They were also observed in such establishments throughout the strictly feudal period of our history. Indeed they survived feudalism, and are still commemorated in the titles

of courtly servants and the customs of royal kitchens. Writing towards the close of the last century, the Reverend Richard Warner observed that the two “yeomen of the mouth,” still maintained on the royal establishment of St. James’s Palace, were the official successors of the gentle serving-men, who, in ancient days, tested with their own lips the meat and drink offered to princely feasters.

No sovereign of comparatively modern time had more reason to fear poisoners, and take continual precaution against them than the virgin-queen of England whose capital harboured scores of religious zealots, hopeful to win salvation by taking her life. And that she employed the most important of the ancient measures for excluding death from the pot, we know from the graphic page of the most amusing “literary tourist” of the sixteenth century. When he visited England in 1598, Paul Hentzner went down to Greenwich by a boat which occasioned much commotion and noise amongst the flocks of swans* that whitened the surface of the river. On landing, the traveller went to Greenwich Palace,

* “This river,” says Hentzner, whose Latin record of his stay in England was loosely Englished by Horace Walpole, “abounds in swans, swimming in flocks; the sight of them and their noise is vastly agreeable to the fleets that meet them in their course.” “Olores autem,” runs the original narrative, “agminatim, læto occursu et festivis cantibus subeuntes classes recipiunt, ac undique

and saw the fast-aging queen take the chief meal of the day. Gorgeously-clad in red jackets, embellished with golden roses, the *buffetiers* brought the viands from the kitchen to the banqueting-chamber on silver or silver-gilt dishss. The German spectator was delighted with the brave costume, and superb stature of the gentle side-board-men, who were the tallest and comeliest fellows in the whole country. Twelve trumpeters and two drummers played martial music in the great hall, whilst the dishes were being arranged on the high-table. And as each *buffetier* approached the dais, he paused before a lady-in-waiting, the *Prægustatrix*, who assayed the dish in his hands by giving him a mouthful of its contents.* The viands having

retia siluris atque salmonibus expanduntur."—*Vide PAULI HENTZNERI "ITINERARIUM."*

* "Cumque pabulum commorata ad mensam esset, venerunt satellites regii, omnes capite nudi, sagis rubris induti, quibus in posticâ parte erant affixa rosæ aureæ, singulis vicibus xxiv messes ferculorum, in patinis argenteis et maxima ex parte deauratis, adferentes; ab his nobilis quidam ordine cibos accepit et mensæ imposuit; *prægustatrix* vero, cui libet satelliti, ex eâdem, quam ipse met attulerat, patinâ, buccellam degustandam præbuit, ne aliqua veneni subesset suspicio. Dum satellites isti, qui centum numero, procerâ corporis staturâ, et omnium robustissimi ex toto Angliae regno, ad hoc munus summâ curâ diliguntur, supradictos cibos adportarent, erant in aulæ area XII Tubicines, et duo Tympanistæ, qui tubis, buccinis, et tympanis magno sonitu per sesquihoram clangebant; cæremoniis autem, modo commemoratis, circa mensam absolutis, aderant illis virgines aliquot nobiles, quæ singulari cum

been thus essayed and placed upon the table, maids of honour (*virgines aliquot nobiles*) entered the banqueting-chamber, and taking the dishes in their hands bore them to an inner room, where the queen ate her dinner under the observation of a few ladies and gentlemen of the court who stood before her.

From what has been said of the care taken by assayers to cover the tasted meats and drinks, readers may see the original purpose of dish-covers and pot-lids, which were mere guards against poison. It also appears from the instruction given to cup-bearers by the author of the “Boke of Curtasye,” that the lid of a cup of estate was not attached to the vessel, as the cup-bearer, after removing the cover and inverting it, was required to use it as a drinking-cup.

veneratione, cibos de mensâ auferebant, et in interius et secretius Reginæ cubiculum adportabant: Eligere ibi Regina solet quos vult, cæteri pro Gynæceo servantur. Prandet et cœnat sola paucis astantibus.—*Vide PAULI HENTZNERI, J. C., “ITINERARIUM GERMANIAE, GALLIAE, ANGLIAE, ITALIAE.”*

Horace Walpole's English rendering of this specimen of Hentzner's Latin has been given in a previous note. In the dress of these *buffetiers* of Greenwich Palace, the reader recognizes the ancient costume of the “beef-eaters” of the Tower of London. In the seventeenth century the beef-eater's bright jacket bore only the English *rose*. It received the additional adornment of the thistle when the Stuart came to the throne. The shamrock leaves were added at a still later date.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEDIÆVAL MENUS.

"The messes both in the Roll and the Editor's MS. are chiefly soups, potages, ragouts, hashes, and the like hotch-potches; entire joints of meat being never served, and animals, whether fish or fowl, seldom brought to table whole, but hacked and hewed, and cut in pieces or gobbets. The mortar was also in great request, some messes being actually denominated from it, as mortrews or morterelys."—*Vide SAMUEL PEGGE ON "THE FORME OF CURY."*

"Of alle maner metes ye must thus know and fele,
The fumosities of fysch, flesche and fowles dyners and feele,
And alle maner of sawces for fische and flesche to preserve your
lord in heale;
To yow it belongyth to know alle þese euery deale."

Vide "THE BOKE OF NURTURE."

THE mediæval menus for stately banquets comprised three courses, with from eight or ten to twenty or more different viands in each course. Inferior dinners often had but two courses: and a homely entertainer incurred no charge of niggardliness if his bill of fare consisted of a single course of many dishes. But in "high life," from the Conquest to the Reformation, the table was covered three times at a ceremonious feast; and it was usual, at least in times subsequent to the opening of the fifteenth century, to prelude the first course with some such whet as brawn served with mustard-

sauce, and a glass of Malmsey (if brawn was no part of the first course), and to follow up the third course with a wafer and comforting fillip of hippocras, the favourite liqueur of our olden epicures. The preliminary whet and concluding fillip were, in the language of cooks, "given out of course." The menus at Henry the Fourth's nuptials with Jane of Navarre, and at Henry the Fifth's marriage with Catharine of France, like the stateliest bills of fare set forth in John Russell's "Boke of Nurture," comprised three courses. The same was the provision for the *chief* tables at the Inthronization of Archbishop Neville and Archbishop Warham.

At Henry the Fourth's bridal feast, a feast of several days and many separate regalements, there was a fish menu and a flesh menu; the one for banquets on fish-days, and the other for repasts on flesh-days. Following a bad leader, Mr. Warner has regarded these separate menus as parts of the same bill of fare, and inferred erroneously that the nuptial dinner had six courses, a procedure unknown to the culinary authorities of the period.

The flesh-menu was as follows :—

The First Course.—1. Fillets of meat, rolled, fried in bread-crumbs, and powdered with dried herbs and galyngale. 2. A standing compote of ground rice, honey, salted mulberries, flavoured with spices

and wine. 3. Hotchpot of common meats, such as beef, mutton, veal. 4. Young swans. 5. Fat capons. 6. Pheasants. 7. Fat puddings of minced meat in crust. 8. A subtlety.

The Second Course.—1. Hashed venison with frumenty. 2. Jelly. 3. Sucking-pigs. 4. Rabbits. 5. Bittern. 6. Stuffed *puleyng* (whatever that may be). 7. Fried leaches, made chiefly of cream, sugar, isinglass, and almonds. 8. Boiled brawns, *i.e.*, pieces of flesh of swine and other creatures. 9. A subtlety.

The Third Course.—1. Almond-cream. 2. Pears in syrup. 3. Roast venison. 4. Ryde. 5. Woodcockes. 6. Plovers. 7. Rabbits. 8. Quails. 9. Snipes. 10. Fieldfares. 11. A meat (probably game) pie. 12. Sturgeon. 13. Fritters. 14. A subtlety.

For fish-feasts, the following bill of fare was provided :—

The First Course.—1. Viand Royal: the standing compote of rice, honey, and salted mulberries, that figured in the first course of the flesh-menu. 2. Lombardy mess of divers fish. 3. Salt-fish. 4. Lampreys powdered with spices. 5. Pike. 6. Bream. 7. Roasted salmon. 8. Lombardy fish-pie. 9. A subtlety.

The Second Course.—1. Hashed porpoise with frumenty. 2. Jelly. 3. Bream. 4. Salmon.

5. Conger-eels. 6. Gurnards. 7. Plaice. 8. Lam-prey-pie. 9. Fried leaches. 10. A subtlety.

The Third Course.—1. Almond cream. 2. Pears in syrup. 3. Tench, two in a dish. 4. Trout. 5. Fried flounders. 6. Perch. 7. Roast lamprey. 8. Lochys and colys (whatever they may be). 9. Sturgeon. 10. Crabs, crayfish, and lobsters. 11. Graspeys (*sic*). 12. A subtlety.

At the nuptial banquets of Henry the Fifth and Catharine, the fish-menu was this:—

The First Course.—1. Brawn and mustard. 2. Eels. 3. Frumenty. 4. Pike with herbs. 5. Lam-prey powdered with spices. 6. Trout. 7. Codlings. 8. Fried plaice. 9. Fried whiting. 10. Crabs. 11. A Lombardy leach, flourished. 12. Fish-pies, *i.e.*, hotch-potches of fish served in crust. 13. A subtlety, representing a pelican on a nest with her birds, and Saint Catherine holding a book, and disputing with the doctors; in Catherine's hand “*a reson,*” inscribed, “*Madame la Royne,*” whilst from the pelican's mouth issued a scroll inscribed, “*Ce est la signe, et du Roy, pur tenir joy, et a tout sa gent elle mete sa intent.*”

The Second Course.—1. Jelly dyed with columbine flowers. 2. White pottage or almond-cream. 3. Sea-bream. 4. Conger-eels. 5. Soles. 6. Chevin. 7. Broiled roach. 8. Fried smelts. 9. Lobster or crayfish. 10. Leaches with Damascus cakes,

flourished with “une sans plus.” 11. Baked lampreys. 12. Flampaynes* flourished with an heraldic device, *i.e.*, “a scutcheon royal, containing three crowns of gold, and planted with *fleurs de lis* and flowers of enamel wrought with confections.” 13. A subtlety: “a panter, with an image of Saynte Katherine with a whele in her hande, and a rolle wyth a reason in her other hande, saying, ‘La Royne ma file in ceste ile par bon reson aves renount.’”

The Third Course.—Dates in compost, *i.e.*, fruit mince-meat. 2. Mottled cream. 3. Carp, fried with oil, bread-crumbs and onions. 4. Turbot. 5. Tenche. 6. Perch. 7. Fresh sturgeon with welkes. 8. Roast porpoise. 9. Crayfish. 10. Prawns. 11. Eels roasted with lampreys. 12. A white leach, embellished with hawthorn leaves and red bramble-berries. 13. A marchpayne, *i.e.*, grand cake, garnished with figures of angels, and an image of St. Catherine, holding the motto, “Il est escrit par voir et eit, per mariage pur, cest guerre ne dure.” 14. A subtlety (thus described in the old record): “A tiger, lookyng in a myrour, and a man syttyng on horsebacke, clene armyd, holdyng

* Flaumpeyns.—Take fat pork ysode. Pyke it clene. Grynde it smalle. Grynde chese, and do thereto; with sugar, and gode powders make a coffyn of an inche depe, and do this fars therein. Make a thynne foile of gode paste and kerfe out thereof smale pointes. Fry ham fars, and bake it up on.

in hys armes a tyger whelpe with this reason, ‘*Par force sanz reson je ay prise cest beste;*’ and with his one hande makynge a countenance of throwynge of myrrours at the great tigre, the which hold thys reson, ‘*Gile de mirrour ma fete distour.*’”

Special inquirers having been told where they may find fuller particulars concerning the arrangements of the English dinner-table in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there is no need to burden these pages with many bills of fare; but general readers will like to glance at the menus set forth in the “Boke of Nurture” by the greatest authority of his day on all matters of courtly feeding. For “a dynere of flesche,” John Russell directs:—

“THE FURST COURSE,

“Furst set for the mustard and brawne of boore, þe wild swyne,
 Such potage as þe cooke hath made of yerbis, spice, and wyne,
 Beeff, moton, stewed feysawnd, Swan with the Chawdwyf,
 Capourn, pigge, vensoun bake, leche lombard, fruture viaunt fyne;
 And þan a Sotelte:
 Maydof̄ mary þat holy virgyne,
 And Gabrielle gretynge hur with an ave.

“THE SECOND COURSE,

“Two potages, blanger mangere, and also jely,
 For a standard, vensoun rost, kyd, fawne, or cony,
 Bustard, stork, crane, pecok in hakille ryally,
 Heiron-sew or betowre, with serve with bred, yf þat drynk be by;
 Partriche, wodcock, plovere, egret, rabettes sowhere;
 Gret briddes, larkes, gentille breme de mere,
 Doucettes, payn puff, with leche Joly Ambere,
 Fretour powche, a sotelte folowynge in fere,

The course for to fullfylle,
 An angelle goodly kan appere,
 And syngynge with a mery chere,
 Unto iij sheperdes upon an hille.

“THE IIJ^d. COURSE.

“Creme of almondes, and mameny, þe iij course in coost,
 Curlew, brew, snytes, quales, sparrows, martonettes rost,
 Perche in gely, crevise deive douz, pety perneis with þe moost,
 Quynces bake, leche dugard, Fruture sage, y speke of cost,
 And soteltes for the soleyne :
 That lady þat conseuyd by the holy gost,
 Hym þat destroyed þe fendes boost,
 Presented plesantly by þe kynges of coleyn.

Afftur þis, delicatis mo.

Blaunderelle, or pepyns, with carawey in confite,
 Wafurs to ete, ypocras to drynk with delite.
 Now this fest is fynysched, voyd þe table quyte,
 Go we to þe fysche fest while we haue respite,
 And þan with goddes grace þe fest wille be do.”

No mere regalement for ascetics, the “dinere of fische,” prescribed by John Russell, was not less rich in dainties and tasteful ornaments than the flesh banquet.

“THE FURST COURSE.

“Muselade or menows, with þe samoun bellows, eles, lampurns in fere.
 Peson with with þe purpose, as good potage, as y suppose,
 As falleth for tyme of þe yere :
 Baken herynge, sugre peron strewynge,
 Grene myllewelle, deynteth and not dere ;
 Pike, lamprey, or soolis, purpose rosted on coles,
 Gurnard, lampurnes bake, a leche, and a fritoure ;
 A semely sotelte folowynge even þere,
 A galaunt yonge man, a wanton wight,

Pypynge and syngynge, lovynge and lyght,
 Standynge on a clowd, sanguineus he hight,
 The begynnynge of þe seson þat cleped is ver.

“ THE SECOND COURSE.

“ Dates in confyte, jely red and white,
 This is good dewyng;
 Congur, somon, dorray, in syrippe if þey lay,
 With oþer disches in sewynge.
 Brett, turbut, or halybut; carpe, base, mylet or trowt,
 Cheven, breme, renewyng;
 Sole, eles, lampurnes, rost; a leche, a fryture, y make now bost:
 The second, sotelte sewynge.
 A man of warre semyng he was,
 A roughe, a red, angry syre,
 An hasty man standynge in fyre,
 As hote as somer by his attyre:
 His name was Theron, and cleped CEstas.

“ THE THIRD COURSE.

“ Creme of almond Jardyne, and onamerry, goode and fyne:
 Potage for þe iij^d. seruyse.
 Fresche sturgen, breme de mere, perche in jely, oryent and clere;
 Whelkes, menuse, þus we devise;
 Shrympis, fresche herynge bryled, pety peueis may not be exiled,
 Leche fryture, a tansey gyse;
 The sotelte, a man with sikelle in his hande
 In a ryvere of watur stande,
 Wrapped in wedes in werysom wyse,
 Hauynge no deynteith to daunce:
 The thrid age of man by liklynes:
 Hervist we clepe hym, fulle of werynes
 Zet þer folowythe mo þat we must dres,
 Regardes riche þat ar fulle of plesaunce.

“ THE III COURSE OF FRUTE.

“ Whot appuls and peres with sugre candy,
 Withe gyngre columbyne, mynsed manerly.

Wafurs with ypcras.

Now þis fest is fynysched, for to make glad chere;

And þaughe so þe þat þe use and manere

Not afore tyme be seyn has.

Neverthelesse aftur my simple affeccion

Y must conclude with þe fourth compleccion,

‘Yemps’ þe cold terme of þe yere,

Wyntur, with his lokkys grey, febille and cold,

Syttynge upon þe stone, both hard and cold,

Nigard in hert and hevy of chere.”

The reader may not infer from the elevation of the “hypocras and wafers with fruit,” to the dignity of “a course,” that ceremonious banquets in Russell’s time had more than three regular courses. It has been already remarked that the liqueur and wafers, when they did not figure in the third course, were dainties “served out of course.” Thus given, as an additional courtesy, rather than as a part of the feast proper, they were the germ of the modern dessert. For the honour accorded to them in the “dinere of fische,” they are indebted to the chef’s want of a fit occasion for the display of the fourth of his series of “grand subtleties,” which he describes with the pride of an inventor as having,

“byn shewed in an howse,

hithe do the gret plesaunce

with oþer sightes of gret Nowelte,

þan han be shewed in Rialle feestes of solempnyte,”

the house, of course, being the residence of his gracious master.

Having duly considered the fare which the good Duke Humphrey was wont to set before his guests, readers do not need to be assured that to "dine with his Grace" was not to "go dinnerless," so long as he kept open hall and a royal board. A patron of letters and learned men, the Duke was the founder of the University Library at Oxford, which in the seventeenth century merged in the larger collection of books that commemorates Sir Thomas Bodley's care for learning. In the interval between the "good duke's" death and the beginning of Bodley's fame, Oxonian humour produced the phrase "he has dined with Duke Humphrey," to denote the condition of the studious scholar who, through over-reading the dinner-hour of his hall, missed the earlier meal of meat and porridge, and went till supper without any fare more substantial than the purely intellectual refreshments provided for the students of the ducal library. The phrase which had this significance at the University was soon applied beyond the bounds of Alma Mater to anyone who had dined on "nothing without a welcome."

Of course, when considering the menus of Duke Humphrey's table, and the other bills of fare set forth in this chapter, readers will bear in mind what he has learned about the culinary processes of the period. Three-fourths of the viands were

served in the form of pottages, mortrews, hotch-pots, chewets, and messes. The remainder consisted chiefly of sweet puddings, standing compotes, crustades, and fruit mashes. With the exception of boars' heads, brawns, and joints of venison, the largest birds, such as the swan, crane, and peacock, and the largest fishes, such as the porpoise, sturgeon, and turbot, which creatures were served whole, or with the appearance of entirety, the mediæval table seldom displayed any "pieces" of great magnitude, though haunches of venison were often served whole, quite as often as they were dished in gobbets with frumenty or thickened broth. The same was the case with the pestels of venison and the joints of beef and mutton, which, though figuring in the bills of fare as stately masses of food, were served in stews, hashes, and "stirabouts."

Another thing to be observed in these ancient menus is the distinction drawn between flesh-feasts and fish-banquets. The latter, consisting of fish, fruits, and vegetable preparations, were devoid of flesh; the brawn, which occasionally appears in their menus, being a preparation of fish that was offered as a substitute for brawn of flesh. From the former, fish was in most cases altogether absent, and, in the cases where the viands were not restricted to flesh, fish was used so sparingly as

to be only an incidental and quite subordinate feature of the repast. As a general rule, our mediæval ancestors reserved their fish for the many days on which the rule of the church forbade them to eat any richer viands. And keeping fish for fish-days, they rarely cared to touch it on flesh-days. For the rest, it is enough to remark that the courses of the mediæval table were as devoid of simplicity as the “olios and gallimawfreys” of which they were chiefly composed. Chiefly remarkable for a complete absence of epicurean design, they were mere collections of good things brought together without regard to the special properties of each dish, and with rude insensibility to the finer requirements of the palate. Viands of the most antagonistic qualities were thus put side by side, and the feaster was encouraged to pass from one to another, alike indifferent to gastronomic discords and confusion of flavours, so long as he procured for his palate a diversity of sensations. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that, though they were obscured by barbaric excess of quantity and by ludicrous misarrangements of material, the mediæval table afforded some indications of discernment and good taste. In learning to whet his palate and rouse his stomach with brawn and mustard the epicure of olden time made a long step towards the gastronomic period when critical feeders prepared them-

selves for *pièces de résistance* by playing with light soups, delicate fish, and dainty *entrées*. It is also creditable to his sagacity that, whilst satisfying his sharper cravings with heavier and more substantial fare, he placed the choicer game and wild fowl with the sweets and trifles of the third course.

A propos of the mediæval fish-menus, it may be here remarked that fish was not more largely consumed by our ancestors of Catholic times, than by our forefathers of the century immediately following the Reformation. If the consumption of fish was discouraged by the change of religion, which relaxed and modified the ancient rules of fasting, it was on the other hand stimulated by civil ordinances for the protection of fisheries, and for the economical use of several kinds of food. Whilst the Friday of every week was almost universally kept as a fish-day in Elizabethan England, either from religious sentiment, or out of regard for ancient usage, there was a general compliance with an order for the same diet on Saturdays. Not content with two weekly fish-days, Queen Elizabeth recommended her subjects to subsist chiefly on the same food on every Wednesday. At the same time fish was the diet of the Lenten season, and of the special fast-days of the church. Thomas Cogan did not over-state the case when he remarked, in

1596, that half the year was set apart for the consumption of fish.*

Nor is it so certain as some social illustrators suppose, that the consumption of fish is much less liberal at the present time than it was in the Elizabethan age. Victorian England has, indeed, no days to which fish-diet has been assigned by civil proclamation; and it is only in the circles of High-Churchmen and Catholics that the ancient fasting-days are still kept with the eating of fish. But on the other hand, fish has become so general an article of daily diet, that it is an ingredient of almost every meal set on the table of a prosperous household. It figures at the breakfast-table in smoking cutlets and dishes of fried bloaters; it is

* Now concerning fish, which is no small part of our sustenance in this realme of England. And that flesh might be more plentifull and better cheape, two daies in the week, that is Fryday and Saturday, are specially appointed to fish, and now of late yeares by the providence of our prudent Queen Elizabeth, the Wednesday is also in a manner restrained to the same order, not for any religien or holiness supposed to be in the eating of fish rather than flesh, but only for the civill policie as I have said. . . And no doubt, if all daies appointed for that purpose were duly observed, but that flesh and fish both would be much more plentifull, and beare lesse price than they doe. For, accounting the Lent Season, and all fasting daies in the yeare together with Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, you shall see that the one halfe of the yeare isordeined to eat fish in. But here I must crave a pardon of divines, that they will give me leave to utter mine opinion touching abstinence from meats."—*Vide THOMAS COGAN'S "HAVEN OF HEALTH," 1596.* How the more regular obser-

seldom absent at luncheon; it never fails to appear with the soup at dinner. No supper is complete without oysters and lobster salad, when these choicest shell-fish are "in season." The case was different in olden time. So long as people were constrained more or less forcibly to eat fish, on certain days and at certain seasons, they avoided it at other times as an inopportune viand, if they did not actually regard it with the repugnance which the dainty are apt to conceive for diet which they have taken on compulsion. Anyhow, the daily and incessant consumption of fish in the modern cuisine is probably not less advantageous to the fisheries than the periodic and intermittent consumption of the same food in former times.

veance of fish-days should have made fish cheaper and more abundant, is less obvious to his readers of to-day than to the worthy Author of "The Haven."

CHAPTER IX.

WARNERS AND SUBTLETIES, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

“These iij sotelties devised in towse,
 wher þey byn shewed in an howse,
 hithe doth gret plesaunce,
 with oþer sightes of gret Nowelte,
 þan han be shewed in Rialle feestes of solempnyte,
 A notable cost þe ordynaunce.”

Vide JOHN RUSSELL's “BOKE OF NURTURE.”

“These curious decorations of the Old English Table, were nothing more than devices in sugar and paste, which, in general, as in the case before us, had some allusion to the circumstances of the entertainments, and *closed* the service of the dishes. The *warners* were ornaments of the same nature, which preceded them. It seems probable that the splendid dessert frames of our days, ornamented with the quaint and heterogeneous combinations of Chinese architecture, Arcadian swains, fowl, fish, beasts and fanciful representations from Heathen mythology, are only the remains of, or, if more agreeable to the modern ear, refinements upon the Old English Soteltees.—*Vide “ANTIQUITATES CULINARIAE.”*”

SOMETHING more should be said of the Warners and Subtleties which were the most conspicuous of the several fanciful adornments of the Old English table. Like the barley-sugar bird-cage which Albert Smith saw on half-a-hundred different supper-tables during three successive seasons of Victorian London, they were made for the pleasure of the eye rather than of the palate. Guests were expected to admire, without demolishing them.

It does not appear that they were ever eaten; and they often contained materials by no means toothsome. In earlier times, composed chiefly or altogether of sugar and pastry, they were at a later date the contrivance of the joiner and worker in pasteboard, rather than of the cook.

Rising several feet above the table they were bright with paint, and with curiously-blazoned flags that gave the clue to their meanings. Sometimes they were mere combinations of escutcheons and other heraldic devices. But they more frequently comprised figures grouped and adorned so as to illustrate the fables of chivalric romance, or enforce honest maxims, or render an apt compliment to one or more of the chief partakers of the banquet. Martial exploits and the triumphs of the chase were thus celebrated in confectionery. At other times the subtlety would exhibit a scene of sacred story, or call attention to a recent incident of the domestic life of an honoured person. The reader has already seen John Russell's subtleties of the four seasons. At a bridal feast, one at least of the subtleties always pointed with greater or less (usually less) delicacy to what dear old Samuel Richardson calls in one of his novels, "the parturient circumstances of matrimony." For instance, the author of "For to serve a lord," (written near the close of the 15th century), directs that one of the chief adorn-

ments of the Bridal Banquet* should be a cake, surmounted by the figure of a lady in urgent need of the doctor. The mention of this adornment for the bridal table reminds one of the device exhibited by the Intendant of Gascony at a banquet to cele-

* "A BRIDAL BANQUET.

"For to make a feste for a bryde,

"*The first course*:—brawne with the borys hed, lying in a felde, hegge about with a scriptur on this wyse —

" Welcombe you bretheren godely in this hall,

Joy be unto you all,

That ene this day it is now fall !

That worthy lorde that lay in an oxe stalle

Meynteyne your husbande and you with your gystys alle.

Ifurmente with veneson, swanne, pigge,

Ifesaunte, with a grete custarde, with a sotelte.

A lambe stondyng in scriptour, saying on this wyse :

' I mekely unto you, sovrayne, am sente,
to dwell with you, and ever be present.'

"*The second course*.—Veneson in broth, viande Ryalle, veneson rosted, crane, cony, a bake mete, leche damaske, with a sotelte : An anteloppe sayng on a sele that seith with scriptour,

' beith all glad and merry at this messe,
and prayeth for the king and all his.'

"*The thirde course*.—Creme of almondys, losynge in syruppe, betoure, partridge, plover, snyte, pouder veal, leche veal well is in sotelte, roches in sotelte, plaice in soteltie, a bake mete with a sotelte ; an angel with a scriptour, ' thanke all, god, of this feste.'

"*The iiij course*.—Payne puff, chese, freynes, brede hote, with a cake, and a wif lying in childe-bed, with a scriptour saing in this wise, ' I am comyng toward your bryde. If ye dinte onys loke to me ward, I wene ye nedys muste.'

"*Another course or servise*.—Brawne with mustard, vmblys of a dere or of a sepe ; swanne, capoun, lambe,

brate the birth of the Duke of Burgundy. "The Intendant," says Horace Walpole, "treated the noblesse with a dinner and a dessert, the latter of which concluded with a representation, by wax figures moved by clockwork, of the whole labour of the Dauphiness, and the happy birth of an heir to the monarchy."

The warner and subtleties of the Tudor cooks surpassed the subtle contrivances of earlier artistes in magnitude and elaborateness. At the several banquets attending the Inthronization of Archbishop Nevill, every table had one of these cumbrous ornaments, that were made of half-a-dozen uneatable materials, as well as of sugar and pastry. At the superior tables the quaint structures were changed with the courses. One of the warner, representing several scenes, was brought to the table on three separate boards, each of which sustained an enormous and quaintly fabricated toy. The king "syttynge in the parliament with hys lordes about hym in their robes, and the Chancellor

Here again, the cook gives a *fourth* course, consisting of little but a cake, cheese, and the subtlety which raised the after-cates to the dignity of a course. The introduction of the cheese is notable, it being one of the earliest mentions of a fashion still followed. As for the "other course," (a mere suggestion for an "out of course," prelude or epilogue), it was no regular course. Though drawn by an innovator, this menu was for a banquet of *three* courses, with additions.

of Oxford, with other doctors about hym," were represented in one of the compartments of the grand device, which comprised "eight towers, embattled and made with flowers, standyng on every towre a bedil in his habite, with his staffe." At the table provided for the Master of the Rolls, the Archdeacons, and Doctors, the grand subtlety was "a church Abbaye lyke, with many altares, and a chayre set at the hygh Altare, and a doctor syttinge therein, with his backe turned to the altare, lyke a judge of the Arches, with the certaine doctors, and proctors pleadyng causes of the lawes of the Church before the sayde judge."

The taste for cumbrous contrivances of this kind prevailed throughout the Tudor period; and, far from languishing under the Stuarts, it was productive of greater absurdities in the seventeenth than in any earlier time of our culinary annals. The civil troubles of that century were unfavourable to cooks and their art. Master Robert May, chef to Lord Montague, Lord Lumley, Sir Kenelm Digby, as well as to other lavish amphitryons of his time, speaks pathetically of the injury done to gastronomic science by the "unhappy and culinary disturbances of those times." Indeed, the venerable cook* would

* "Though I may be envied," he observes, grandly, "by some that only value the private interests above posterity and the publick good, yet God and my own conscience would not permit me to bury these,

have us believe that all higher cookery would have perished from the land during the Commonwealth, had it not been for “the *Mæcena’s* and patrons of the generous art,” who sheltered him in their kitchens during a gloomy epoch, and afforded him opportunities for accomplishing those “triumphs and trophies of cookery” which still render him famous. Able in every department of his art, Robert May was especially great in imagining “novelties,” and enlarging the sphere of “subtle diversions.”

This artiste and his patrons cannot be fully appreciated by the student who has never perused “The Accomplished Cook,” which, whilst exhibiting the resources of “the generous art,” abounds with illustrations of Caroline society.

In the fulness of his powers, Robert May executed the choicest of his triumphs, as a fit prelude to a Court supper on Twelfth-night. Having modelled a ship of war in pasteboard, he filled it with toy guns coated with sugar and pastry, tricked it gaily with flags and streamers, and sent it into action by means set forth in the following passage :—

my experiences, with my silver hairs in the grave.”—*Vide “THE ACCOMPLISHED COOK, OR THE ART AND MYSTERY OF COOKERY.”* Wherein the whole Art is revealed. Approved by fifty years experience and industry of Robert May, in his attendance on several persons of honour, 1660.

"Place your ship," he says, "firm in the great charger; then make a salt round about it, and stick therein egg-shells full of sweet water, you may by a great pin take out all the meat of the egg by blowing, and then fill it up with rose-water; then on another charger have the proportion of a stage made of coarse paste, with a broad arrow on the side of him, and his body filled with claret wine; in another charger at the end of the stag have the proportion of a castle with battlements, portcullises, gates and drawbridges made of paste-board, the guns and kickses, and covered with paste as the former; place it at a distance from the ship to fire at each other. The stag being placed between them with egg-shells of sweet water (as before) placed in the salt. At each side of the charger wherein is the stag, place a pye made of coarse paste, in one of which let there be some live frogs, in each other some live birds; make these pyes of coarse paste filled with bran, and yellowed over with saffron or the yolks of eggs, guild them over in spots, as also the stag, the ship and the castle; bake them and place them with guilt bay-leaves on turrets and tunnels of the castles and pyes; being baked, make a hole in the bottom of your pyes, take out the bran, put in your frogs, and birds, and close up the holes with the same coarse paste, then cut the lids neatly up; to be taken off the tunnels: being all placed in order upon the table, before you fire the trains of powder, order it so that some of the ladies may be persuaded to pluck an arrow out of the stag, then will the claret wine follow, as blood runneth out of a wound. This being done with admiration to the beholders, after some short pause, fire the train of the castle, that the pieces all of one side may go off, then fire the trains of one side of the ship as in battel, next turn the chargers, and by degrees fire the trains of each other side as before. This done, to sweeten the stink of the powder, let the ladies take the egg-shells full of sweet waters, and throw them at each other. All dangers being seemingly over, by this time you may suppose they will desire to see what is in the pyes; when lifting first the lid off one pye, out skip some frogs, which make the ladies to skip and shreek; next after the other pye, when come out the birds, who by a natural instinct flying into the lights, will put out the candles, so that what

with the flying birds and the skipping frogs, the one above, the other beneath, will cause much delight and pleasure to the whole company; at length the candles are lighted, a banquet brought in, the musick sounds, and everyone with much delight and content rehearses their actions in the former passages. These were formerly the delights of the nobility, before good house-keeping had left England, and the sword really acted that which was only counterfeited in such honest and laudable exercises as these."

In filling egg-shells with scented water, Robert May followed the example of the Italian artistes, who at carnivals and other festal times were wont to prepare scores upon scores of the same fragile missiles for the hands of sportive ladies. When Dudley North, the Lord Keeper's brother, visited Italy,* in the time of Charles the Martyr, he was greatly diverted by the spectacle of gentlewomen pelting one another, as well as their cavaliers, in the public ways, with egg-shells containing sweet water. To the same country, Robert May was also indebted for the "surprise pies," which caused the fair admirers of his culinary extravaganza to "skip and shreek."

* "Now is the time," wrote the merchant of noble birth, "between Christmas and Lent, which is called Carnival. The people use all the mirth they can devise; such as passing in masquerade clothes, one after one, and another after another manner; tossing eggshells with sweet water, where they see women they like; and thus tossing eggs at first, the women will reach them till the basket be divided betwixt them, and then to pelting each other they go; and so are all Sundays and holidays spent.—*Vide "LIFE OF THE HON. SIR DUDLEY NORTH."*"

In the earlier years of the eighteenth century, ornaments, bearing any close resemblance to the manners and subtleties of the feudal period, were seldom placed on fashionable tables. They might still be seen in civic halls on gaudy days; but high life had replaced them with more durable and less cumbrous devices of china and porcelain. Then came the day of harlequins, gondoliers, and shepherdesses in ceramic ware. The writings of Addison and Walpole* contain allusions to several successive fashions for the embellishment of the festal board. Shepherdesses, wandering in groves of paper and silk thread, were superseded by pastoral scenes of a more realistic character. For awhile there was a rage for culinary representations of cattle browsing on fat pasture, farm-yards, and rustic cottages. A

* "The last branch of our fashion, into which the close observation of nature has been produced, is our desserts. Jellies, biscuits, sugar-plums, and creams have long since given way to harlequins, gondoliers, Turks, Chinese, and shepherdesses of Saxon china. But these, unconnected, and only seeming to wander among groves of curled paper and silk flowers, were soon discovered to be too insipid and unmeaning. By degrees, meadows of cattle, of the same brittle material, spread themselves over the table; cottages rose in barley-sugar; Neptunes in cars of cockle-shells triumphed over oceans of looking-glass or seas of silver tissue. Women of the first quality came home from Chevenix's, laden with dolls and babies, not for their children, but for their housekeeper. At last, even these puerile puppetshows are sinking into disuse, and more manly ways of concluding repasts are established. Gigantic figures succeed to pygmies."—*Vide* LORD OXFORD's "WORKS."

few seasons later, fashionable humour, taking a mythological turn, commissioned Neptunes of painted sugar to drive triumphal cars over seas of looking-glass. Dolls that could wink their eyes and cry “mamma,” and wax babies of alarmingly natural proportions and aspect, had their brief hour of favour with Amphitryons and hostesses, but were soon discarded on a fresh outbreak of the mythological mania, for monstrous dishes of gods and goddesses, that required the services of a detachment of engineers for their safe transference from the pantry to the banqueting-room. “Imaginez-vous que milord n'a pas voulu faire ôter le plafond,” exclaimed the indignant chef who had produced one of these preposterous structures, only to learn that his master, Lord Albemarle, would not allow the ceiling of his dining-room to be destroyed, in order that the group of deities might be suitably placed on a supper-table.

Under the Regency, and after the Regent's example, fashionable folk called the gardener to the aid of the cook, and brightened their tables with the choicest flowers of the conservatory, an excellent fashion, that in these days of dinners *à la Russe* covers the board with objects which delight the eye, when the epicures' grosser appetites have been satisfied. At Carlton House, also, the greatest gentleman of Europe astonished his friends by seating

them at a table so constructed that, whilst regaling themselves with the most delicate works of culinary art, they looked on a purling rivulet, populous with gold fish, and banked with moss and flowers. But though applauded for a season, this singular aquarium was soon discarded, and should be remembered merely as a costly freak of the royal epicure, who chiefly distinguished himself amongst table decorators by using fruit and flowers more liberally and skilfully than any previous Amphitryon of modern England.

Even in this age of revivalism, when ceramic taste is restoring the long-neglected blue of the willow-pattern pottery, it is not probable that the Warners and Subtleties of olden time will reappear at festal tables. Approving the changes which have successively swept away the stupendous structures of paste-board and pastry, the antique groups and cumbrous dishes of the old entertainers, universal sentiment has declared in favour of leaves and flowers as the proper garniture for the epicurean board. The same good taste also requires that in the arrangement of these natural ornaments care should be taken to place them above or below the line of vision. However beautiful it may be in its proper place, the decoration which breaks the festal view, and puts one's opposite neighbours out of sight, is a hindrance to *vis-à-vis* conversation,

and an irritating interference with the rights of guests.

No more effective obstacle to enjoyment can be produced by human ingenuity than one of those long baskets, closely packed with high, leafy plants, which are sometimes set on dinner-tables for pictorial effect. Under the cold shade of such an impenetrable thicket, the brightest wit ceases to shine, and the dazzling belle loses her radiance. A table-talker might as well pelt a haystack with epigrams as throw *jeux d'esprit* against such a wall of garden-stuff. Unable to see the faces on the other side of the leafy covert, he misses the smiles which should encourage and reward his humour; and feeling himself cut off from human sympathy, he even lacks spirit to cheer the clouded sharer of his depressing position. Bearing these facts in mind, the artistic decorator of a festal board prefers cut to growing flowers, and whilst placing the bright blossoms only a few inches above the level of the table, disposes his ferns so that guests on opposite sides of the plane look at one another beneath the drooping fronds.

At present, the Christmas Trees, planted on supper-tables for the delight of children, are the only remains of the intrusive decorations which were so conspicuous at the feasts of the Old English. But in the smaller confections and toy-sweetmeats

of our tables—such as crackers, bonbons, chocolate-drops, and “kisses”—may still be seen the vestiges of a fashion that centuries since scattered curious trifles of the same kind over the groaning board. In the fabrication of lozenges and minute sugar-toys, the confectioners of olden time expended much care, and often exhibited more of ingenuity than delicacy. In spite of all that has been urged against the levity and impudencē of “the girl of the period,” it is certain that she would not fail to exhibit signs of abhorrence and outraged dignity if she were offered at a ball-supper such whimsical sweet-meats as gallant knights in the palmiest days of chivalry used to press upon their dames and damoiselles. As for the mottoes of our bon-bons, it is needless to observe that they are miniature reproductions of the “resons” and sentimental “flourishes” of the mediæval subtleties.

CHAPTER X.

CARVING AND CARVERS.

"Take your knyfe in your hande, and cut brawne in ye dysshe as it lyeth, and laye it on your souerayne's trenchour and se there be mustarde."—"THE BOKE OF KERUYNGE" (WYNKYN DE WORDE.)

"Now, fadir, feire falle ye, and crist yew haue in cure,
For of þe nurture of keruynge y suppose þat y be sure.
JOHN RUSSELL'S "BOKE OF NURTURE."

"Curteis he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf before his fader at the table.

CHAUCER'S TALES: "THE YONGE SQUIER."

SO long as English fare consisted chiefly of stews and minced meats, with other messes that would at the present time be helped without a knife, there was small need of a carver at an ordinary banquet. But though the feudal table afforded him comparatively few occasions for the exhibitions of his skill, the carver found employment at ceremonious feasts, and his office was honoured throughout the Roman or spoon-period of our ancient cookery. It was he who sliced the brawn and venison and other large pieces of the mediæval feast. When served whole, the swan and peacock were cut artistically by his gleaming knife. And when they were put on the board with only the appearance of entirety, he divided their nicely arranged parts with all the

*"She minded her compaine to sit in frowlens fine
(that she deid much to see the creatures' we."*

Croftor

formal “flourishes” of a carver actually dissecting a royal bird. The wild fowl and smaller ground game, which were usually put whole on the table, afforded him other occasions for showing artistic adroitness and a precise knowledge of the rules and terms of his craft.

In days when the offices of footmen and other male menials were filled by gentle serving-men, he was always a gentleman of honest lineage, and not seldom a person of noble degree, though of a rank inferior to that of his employer. The four carvers and cup-bearers of Edward the Fourth’s special table were bannerets or bachelor-knights ;* and at the banquets attending Archbishop Nevill’s enthronization, the chief carver was Lord Willoughby, some of whose fellow-servants† at the same fes-

* “In the ‘Liber Niger Domus Regis Angliae,’ (i.e., Edward the Fourth), containing orders for the Royal Household, anno 1478, we read, ‘Bannerets or Bachelor Knights to be carvers or cup-bearers, (four).’”—*Vide SAMUEL PEGGE’s “CURIALIA MISCELLANEA.”*

† The staff of chief-servants at the festival comprised the following nobles, knights and gentlemen :—“First, the Earle of Warwicke, as Steward; the Earle of Northumberlante, as Treasurer; the Lorde Hastings, as Comptroller; the Lorde Wylloughby, Carver; the Lorde of Buckyngham, Cup-bearer; Sir Richarde Strangwiche, Sewer; Sir Walter Worley, Marshall and viii other knyghtes of the Hall; also viii Snyuers, besides other two Sewers; Sir John Malyvery, Panter; the Sergeant of the Kinge’s Ewery, to be Ewerer; Greystoke and Nevell, kepers of the Cubbords; Sir John Breaknock, Surveyor of the Hall.”—*Vide “INTHRONIZATION OF ARCHBISHOP NEVILL.”*

tival were superior to him in wealth and social quality.

Whilst his manner conformed to the ceremoniousness, the carver's terms accorded with the quaint pedantry of the period whose chefs were schoolmen, and whose scholars delighted in fantastic phraseology. In the "Boke of Nurture," John Russell gives us a chapter on "kervyng of flesh," and another on the "kervyng of fische," from which it appears that Duke Humphrey's carver had a distinct set of observances for almost every "creature" that came under his knife. He might not touch venison with his hand; but having sliced the "piece" deftly, he put the juiciest slice on his lord's plate, by means of his broad-bladed carving-knife, and without the assistance of a fork. Birds he might raise by their legs with his left hand before dismembering them; but his skill was seen in the quickness and certainty with which he poised "each portion" on his knife, and conveyed it to the plate without touching it with his fingers. At moments of difficulty he had recourse to the spoon; but in days prior to the introduction of table-forks, the perfect carver used the spoon as little as possible, and would have died of shame, had he been seen to put his fingers upon a viand in a way prohibited by the laws of his art. It was expressly conceded by those laws that he might touch beef and mutton

with his left hand ; but he always exercised this privilege discreetly and with sensitive care for his lord's feelings and his own honour. With the knife, also, he was wondrously expert in removing sinew and unsightly bits from each slice. To the youth aspiring to distinguish himself in courtly service, John Russell says :—

“ Withe youre lift hande touche beeff, chyne, motonn, as is a-fore said,

& pare hit clene or þat ye kerve, or hit to your lord be layd;
and as it is showed afore, beware of upbrayde;
alle fumosite, salt, senow, raw, aside be hit convayde.”

It was also customary for the carver, when he had cut and prepared a slice of meat, to dissect it into four strips, holding together at the end, so as to resemble in some degree an obsolete instrument of punishment—the Scotch tawse. Provided with such a slice, the courtly feaster lifted it with his fingers, using the undivided end as a handle, whilst he ate the four long pieces. Having eaten the strips, he of course laid aside the “ handle,” which he had touched, as unfit for the palate of a nice feeder. Addressing his apt pupil on this matter, John Russell says :—

“ But furþermore enforme yow y must in metis kervynge,
Mynse ye must iiij lees, to oon morselle hangynge,
þat youre mastir may take with ij fyngurs in his sawce dippynge,
and so no napkyn, brest, ne boreclothe, in anywise embrowynge.”

From this order, and many similar directions for the performance of work which would not now-a-days devolve on the mere distributor of a dish, it is obvious that the carver of “The Boke of Nurture” was a thoughtful “helper” of meat, as well as an operator on *pièces de résistance*. A valet bent on ministering to the comfort and caprices of his special master, rather than a performer acting theatrically to the admiration of a score spectators, he is a vigilant, quick-handed, ready “waiter,” not a stately illustrator of the laws of carving. Faultless as an attendant on a solitary *gourmet*, he would perhaps have failed in dramatic effectiveness, as chief carver of plumed peacocks at a ceremonious regalement in a crowded hall.

“The Boke of Kervynge” (Wynkyn de Worde), published at the close of Henry the Seventh’s reign, is perhaps more generally known than “The Boke of Nurture,” which it resembles so closely in phraseology that it is little else than a prose version of such parts of Russell’s poetical performance as relate to culinary matters and the service of the table. Whether the anonymous fabricator of this tract was only the shameless plagiarist of John Russell’s superior work, or whether both authors made free use of some earlier scribe,* are questions that antiquaries hesitate to answer, and few readers

* The following lines in the epilogue to the “Boke of Nurture,”

of this page will care to consider. But, whatever may have been the source of his information, Wynkyn de Worde's hack-writer may be thanked for giving us a complete list of terms used by professional carvers.

TERMES OF A KERVER.

Breke that dere ; lesche that brawne ; rere that goose ; lyft that swanne ; sauce that capon ; spoyle that henne ; frusshe that chekyn ; unbrace that mallarde ; unlace that cony ; dysmembre that heron ; displaye that crane ; dysfygure that peacocke ; unjoynt that byttre ; untache that curlew ; alaye that fesande ; wyng that partryche ; wyng that quayle ; mynce that plover ; thye that pegyon ; border that

if taken literally, prove that Russell was not the original author, but only the transcriber of the poem :—

“ And if so þat any be founde, as þrouz myn negligence,
Cast þe cawse on my copy, rude and bare of eloquence,
Whiche to drawe out (I) haue do my besy diligence,
Redily to reforme hit by reson and bettur sentence,
As for ryme or reson, þe forewryter was not to blame,
For as he founde hit aforene hym, so wrote he þe same,
And þaugh he or y in oure matere digres or degrade,
Blame neither of us. For we neuyre hit made.”

But this disclaimer of originality may be only an exercise of literary artifice, common in authors of every age, and frequent in modern novelists, who often proclaim themselves only the “editors” of their own tales. It is probable that Wynkyn de Worde's tract was only the reproduction in type of an old prose MS., which John Russell amended and threw into verse.

pasty; thye that wodcocke; thye all manner of small byrdes; tymbre that fyre; tyere that egge; chyne that samon; strynge that lampraye; splatte that pyke; sauce that tenche; splaye that breme; syde that haddocke; tuske that barbell; culpon that troute; fynne that cheven; trausene that ele; traunche that sturgeon; undertraunche that purpos; tayme that crabbe; barbe that lopster. Here hendeth the goodly termes.

This list accords with what has been already said as to the creatures ordinarily submitted to the carver, in times when common meats were not commonly served in large pieces. Making no mention of what would now-a-days be called "joints," it contains no terms for the orderly carving of beef, mutton, veal, pork. Russell, indeed, gives directions for the cutting and distribution of those common viands; but the carver refused to recognize them as proper subjects for the exercise of his graceful art.

The same terms, employed by carvers of centuries prior to Wynkyn de Worde's time, survived the fashions of the Tudor period, and the changing humours of Caroline England. Appearing in several of the successive cookery books of Elizabeth of England, they may be found in Robert May's "Accomplisht Cook," and other gastronomic works of the Restoration period. The eighteenth century

was passing ere they slowly dropped from the talk of old-fashioned tables.

When a change of gastronomic taste, for which the introduction of the fork was largely though not altogether accountable, had covered the English table with "joints," and increased the demand for skilful carvers, it was not long before the labour of carving was transferred from gentle serving-men, specially dexterous with the knife, to ladies seated at the upper end of the festal table.

In excluding womankind from banquets that were not of a private character, mediæval society seems to have followed a fashion still observed, with occasional departures from ordinary usage, in modern England. Ladies, indeed, brightened the entertainments which celebrated the enthronization of Archbishop Nevill, in Edward the Fourth's time; and we have noticed other feasts at which women displayed their beauty, and wit, and brave adornments. Of course bridal feasts, the grandest of all mediæval festivals, required the presence of the fair sex. But, as a general rule, the quasi-public dinners and suppers of Feudal England were enjoyed by the lords of creation in the absence of their dames and damoiselles. In the lower grades of good society, it was enough for "madam" to superintend the operations of her cooks and servitors in the kitchen, whilst the "master" and his comrades enjoyed the

good cheer which she provided for them. And even when they appeared at table, the ladies of chivalric time did not receive such consideration and courteous treatment as are accorded to them universally in the modern England from which chivalry is said to have departed. The mediæval entertainer of a party, consisting of persons of both sexes, was at no pains to match his guests, so that there was a cavalier for each gentlewoman, or even to assign a gallant partner to each lady, when the number of male guests would enable him to do so. The convenience of the men, rather than the pleasure of the women, was considered in the arrangements for seating the guests. If the table consisted of a single board, the ladies, unless their rank demanded exceptional courtesy, seated themselves wherever they could find room, and often that room was found at the lower end of the dining-hall. If the single table was divided by the "salt," a gentlewoman often found herself sitting with the inferior guests "below" the line of honour, whilst men of no better extraction, and of worse manners, enjoyed the daintier fare "above the salt." And when the table consisted of several separate boards, it often happened that the women of the party were placed at a table by themselves, without a gallant of any kind to bear them company.

In the well-known picture of the King's Lynn

peacock-feast (taken from an old brass in the church of St. Margaret, Lynn Regis, Norfolk), the party consists of eleven feasters seated in a line on one side of a long table. Eight of the eleven feasters are men, and probably the three ladies are indebted for their honourable places at the board to the fact that they are not members of the Amphitryon's household. The tall lady who, discharging the function of chief waitress, appears at one end of the table with a dished peacock in her hands, is probably the mistress of the house. The ministering women at the other end of the table, are also of gentle degree—as their dress and coiffure attest—though they do not presume to seek places at the board which they cover with good cheer.

At the banquets attending Archbishop Nevill's enthronization, all the tables laid in the "Hall" were occupied by men; but there was an imposing show of noble womankind in the "cheefe Chamber," the "seconde Chamber," and the "great Chamber." At the first table of the cheefe Chamber, the Duke of Gloucester, as the king's brother and representative, had the place of honour, with the Duchess of Suffolk on his right, and the Countess of Westmoreland on his left-hand. Three other ladies—the Countess of Northumberland, and two of the Lord Warwick's daughters, also sat at the same table. Hence the guests at the royal table were one man

and five ladies. None but ladies sat at the second table, which afforded accommodation to sixteen fair dames, “the Baronnesse of Graystocke, with three other Baronnesses, and XII other ladies.” Eighteen gentlewomen—maids of honour in attendance on the ladies at the royal table and the second table—were provided with seats, but no cavaliers, at the third table of the chief room. Thus in the whole room there was (gentle servitors excepted) only one man to thirty-nine ladies. If the Duke provided small talk for the Duchess and Countess who supported him, he can scarcely have offered many courtesies to his other messmates, and at the same time have paid adequate attention to the good cheer.

The “seconde Chamber” contained only two tables, and none but ladies were received at them. The feasters at the superior of these boards were the elder Duchess of Suffolk, the Countess of Warwick, the Countess of Oxford, the Lady Hastings, and the Lady Fitzhugh; the second table being laid for the entertainment of “the Ladie Huntley, the Ladie Strangwicke, and viii other ladies.” Whether the Dowager Duchess of Suffolk acted as president at this dinner-party of fifteen ladies, and whether the fair feasters delivered speeches in honour of holy church, when they had satisfied their appetite for food and drink, the

chronicler omits to state; but in the absence of mess-mates of the sterner sex, it is probable that the ladies at table were a rather lifeless and silent assembly, when they had exchanged opinions on matters of toilet and housekeeping, and on the various shortcomings of their servants. Anyhow, we may be sure that the company was less shrilly oratorical than a ladies' dinner-party in Fifth Avenue, New York. Hilarious loquacity was not "the mode" of dinner-parties at the best houses of Feudal England. On the other hand, it should be remembered that though they had no cavalier seated beside them to whisper flatteries and co-operate in flirtation, the ladies of the "seconde Chamber" could, without indecorum, gossip with the waiters, who were all gentlemen of good family.

Of the three tables in the "great Chamber," two were laid for companies altogether made up of men, and the third was provided for twenty-eight guests—fourteen gentlewomen and fourteen gentlemen of unrecorded names. The occupants of the high table in this chamber being four bishops, and the second being assigned to fourteen temporal peers, it may be assumed that the third party of twenty-eight comprised only ladies and gentlemen of unexceptionable quality.

Even so late as Charles the Second's time, when

they had long held possession of the upper end of private table, it was usual to seat the ladies apart from the men, at separate tables, and sometimes in separate chambers, on occasions of quasi-public festivity. Thus, when Mr. Samuel Pepys went in his second-best suit to Sir Anthony Bateman's mayoral banquet at the Guildhall, he tells us that he inspected the "tables prepared for the ladies," which were set in a room for the special accommodation of the fair feasters. On that day no man dined in this room, though gentlemen were permitted to loiter through it and stare at the eating ladies. "After I had dined," the diarist continues, "I and Creed rose, and went up and down the house, and up to the lady's room, and there stayed gazing upon them. But though there were many and fine, both young and old, yet I could not discern one handsome face, which was very strange. I expected musique, but there was none, but only trumpets and drums, which displeased me. The dinner, it seems, is made by the Mayor and two sheriffs for the time being, the Mayor paying one half, and they the other. And the whole, says Proby, is reckoned to come to about seven or eight hundred pounds at most. Being tired with looking upon a company of ugly women, Creed and I went away, took coach, and through Cheapside, and there saw the pageants, which were very silly."

Mr. Pepys was sadly out of temper throughout the day. Having left his new velvet-lined cloak at home "because of the crowde," he felt himself under-dressed, and consequently was out of conceit with himself and the whole world. Moreover being "under a vowe" he could not cheer himself with wine, though with an uneasy conscience he sipped a little hippocras. The ladies would not have been so ugly to his eyes, had he worn his bravest costume. Had he drunk wine, he would have found the pageants less "silly," the drums and trumpets less "displeasing," the table-furniture less defective, and the fare at the Merchant Strangers' board more to his taste.

In Elizabethan England, when gallimawfreys had given way to the substantial fare of our later cookery, it was the custom at private dinners to place the principal joints and masses of meat at the upper end of the table, above the salt, so that the chief guests could see clearly the best of the good cheer, and also appropriate the choicest cuts, before the inferior folk below the joint of honour were served. Fashion having thus decided that the "carving should be done on the table," the ladies were invited to the top of the table, not out of gallantry, but in order that they should do the work which could no longer be executed conveniently by professional carvers. It may cost the

On being entertained at Badminton by his Grace of Beaufort, the Lord Keeper Guildford saw the Duchess with her two daughters *only* at the head of her oblong table.* Whether the Duchess carved any dish, the biographer omits to state, though he is careful to say that *gentlemen* were the only liveried servants in attendance, and that differing from the common use, Badminton custom forbade guests to sit over the oblong table “with tobacco and healths.” It is improbable that Her Grace, who in her pride would allow no ladies but her own daughters to sit with her at the top of the table, condescended to do with her own hands any of the work which the gentle serving-men and the ladies of inferior degree, below the salt, could readily perform.

* “The ordinary pastime of the ladies was in a gallery on the other side, where she,” (i.e., the duchess) “had divers gentlewomen commonly at work upon embroidery and fringe-making; for all the beds of state were made and finished in the house. The meats were very neat, and not gross; no servants in livery attended, but those called gentlemen only; and, in the several kinds, even down to the small beer, nothing could be more choice than that table was. It was an oblong, and not an oval; and the duchess, with her two daughters *only*, sat at the upper end. If the gentlemen chose a glass of wine, the civil offers were made to go down into the vaults, which were very large and sumptuous, or servants, at a sign given, attended with salvers, &c., and many a brisk went round about; but no sitting at table with tobacco and healths, as the common use is.”
Vide ROGER NORTH’s “LIFE OF LORD-KEEPER GUILDFORD.”

But that the Lord-Keeper would have required his wife to carve at his ceremonious banquets, had she survived the date of his instalment in the Marble Chair, readers may learn from Roger's account of his grandest brother's hospitalities. When the keeper of "the pestiferous lump of metal" gave a dinner, Roger—who, though a fairly successful barrister and Recorder of Bristol, was also his lordship's accountant and major-doing—used to sit at the head of the table, "for want of a lady to carve." Save as a chief retainer of his lordship's household, bound to make himself generally useful, Roger had no title to so high a place, nor any disposition to take it without special permission.* John North, the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, besides insisting that the ladies of the upper table were bound to carve, was also of opinion that they ought to carve expeditiously. In early manhood, long before he became a nervous

* "His lordship's custom was after dinner to retire with his company, which were not a few, and of the best quality in town, into a withdrawing-room, and the tea-table followed, where his youngest brother officiated, and him his lordship set at the head of the table, for want of a lady to carve. His suppers were in another room, and where some of his best friends, and some (painted) enemies ordinarily assembled. And this he thought the best refreshment the whole day afforded him; and before twelve he retired, and after a touch of his music, went to bed, his musician not leaving him till he was composed."—*Vide ROGER NORTH'S "LIFE OF LORD-KEEPER GUILDFORD."*

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valetudinarian and magnate of the university, John North used to make mirth at the dinners and suppers of the best houses of Charles the Second's town by noisily demanding that "the ladies at the upper end of the table" should handle their carving-knives briskly, or else with fit humility "come down to their proper places at the lower end."* A free talker in "fit company," and a young divine, seeking preferment at the Merry Monarch's court by a loquacious sprightliness that would not now-a-days recommend a clergyman to the distributors of ecclesiastical patronage, Jack North prided himself on his smartness in bantering womankind. More than one great lady learnt from him "that of all the beasts of the field God Almighty thought woman the fittest companion for man."

* "And I might," says Roger of the young Cantabrigian fellow, "mention some ladies with whom he pretended to be innocently merry and free; and indeed more so (often) than welcome, as when he touched the pre-eminencies of their sex. As for instance, saying that of all the beasts of the field, God Almighty thought woman the fittest companion for man. I have known him demand of the ladies at the upper end of the table, by right of their sitting there, that they would carve for him. 'Else,' said he, 'let them come down to the places at the lower end.' These passages and the like show somewhat of his humour, which made him very popular with the ladies and young company. For, notwithstanding all his seriousness and study, none ever was more agreeably talkative, in fit company, than he was."—*Vide ROGER NORTH's "LIFE OF DR. JOHN NORTH."*

When they had been thus appointed to officiate as distributors of meat, even as their precursors of the Anglo-Saxon period had distributed bread, English gentlewomen of the seventeenth century were instructed by school-mistresses and professors of etiquette as to the ways in which it behoved them to carve joints. That she might be able to grasp a roast chicken without greasing her left hand, the gentle housewife was careful to trim its feet and the lower part of its legs with cut paper. To preserve the cleanliness of her fingers, the same covering was put on those parts of joints which the carver usually touched with the left hand, whilst the right made play with the shining blade. The paper-frill which may still be seen round the bony point and small end of a leg of mutton, is a memorial of the fashion in which joints were *dressed* for the dainty hands of lady-carvers, in time prior to the introduction of the carving-fork, an implement that was not in universal use so late as the Commonwealth, when the author of "Lady Rich's Closet," (1653) admonished gentlewomen to adopt the convenient instrument, in defiance of a common prejudice. "In carving at your own table," says the author of that entertaining work to the 'ingenious gentlewoman of the period,' "distribute the best pieces first; and it will appear very comely and decent to use a fork; so touch no meat without it."

By the same competent teacher, the "ingenious gentlewoman" of a troublous time was instructed on other points of good manners. She was told to sit at table with a straight body, and, even though she were an aunt, to refrain from resting her elbows on the table-cloth. She might not "by ravenous gesture display a voracious appetite." If she talked whilst eating, or "smacked like a pig," or swallowed "spoon-meat so hot" as to bring tears into her eyes, she would be taken for an underbred person, even though she were an earl's daughter. Shunning the appearance of greediness, she should also avoid such squeamishness as was exhibited by the gentlewoman who ate her peas singly, or by the half-pea at a time, and was horrified at the suggestion that she should take them by the spoonful. She was warned still more emphatically not to drink herself out of breath, so that to recover herself she would have to "blow strongly." "Throwing down your liquor," says the "accomplished Lady Rich," with no excessive severity, "as into a funnel, is an action fitter for a juggler than a gentlewoman."*

* "A gentlewoman, being at table abroad or at home, must observe to keep her body straight, and lean not by any means with her elbow, nor by ravenous gesture discover a voracious appetite. Talk not when you have meat in your mouth, and do not smack like a pig, nor venture to eat spoon-meat so hot that the tears stand in your eyes; which is as unseemly as the gentlewoman who pretended

Whilst English society sat at meals, with the women at the upper and the men at the lower end of the table, the author of “A Brief Character of the Low Countries under the States” (1652), informed his readers that the Dutch, with better taste and more gallantry, intermingled the sexes, so that every lady had on either hand a gentleman to amuse her with gossip, and relieve her of the labour of carving. “They sit not,” said the describer of high life in the Low Countries, “as we in England, men together and women first, but ever intermingled with a man between, and instead of marchpanes and such juncates, it’s good manners, if any there be, to carry away a piece of apple-pie in your pocket.” Originating in a time when fashion had discredited the ancient custom that permitted guests to pocket marchpanes and sweet-

to have as little a stomach as she had a mouth, and therefore would not swallow her peas by spoonful, but took them one by one, and cut them into two before she could eat them. It is very uncomely to drink so large a draught that your breath is almost gone, and are forced to blow strongly to recover yourself; throwing down your liquor as into a funnel, is an action fitter for a juggler than a gentlewoman. Thus much for our observations in general. If I am defective in particulars, your own prudence, discretion, and curious observations will supply. In carving at your own table, distribute the best pieces first; and it will appear very comely and decent to use a fork; so touch no meat without it.”—*Vide “THE ACCOMPLISHED LADY RICH’S CLOSET OF RARITIES; or, Ingenious Gentlewoman’s Delightful Companion.”* 1653.

meats, the saying “ Eat what you like, but pocket none,” is a comparatively modern maxim.

In olden time, carvers at table had to observe nice rules in discharging their functions. Besides, distributing the best pieces first, they were required to distribute them amongst the guests of first quality, and with intelligent regard for the laws of heraldic precedence. The greatest man at the feast had an indefensible title to the liver wing of a chicken, and to the thigh of a woodcock ; and his wife might feel affronted if she were helped *after* a lady of inferior quality. At a later date, fashion required the carver to consult the special taste of each guest before helping him to a cut of sirloin or a piece of game. Dr. Kitchiner, however, had the good sense to decry these nice formalities of a too ceremonious etiquette, and to insist that the carver should make expedition rather than politeness his first object. “ To effect this,” he urged, “ fill the plates and send them round, instead of asking each individual if they choose soup, fish, &c., or what particular part they prefer, for, as they cannot be all choosers, you will thus escape making any invidious distinctions. A dexterous carver (especially if he be possessed with that determined enemy to ceremony and sauce, a keen appetite), will help half-a-dozen people in half the time one of your would-be-thought polite folks wastes in making

civil compliments." To save time, the doctor recommended that poultry, especially turkeys and geese, should be sent to table ready cut up. When the author of "The Cook's Oracle" gave this advice, he little imagined how near was the time when the carving-knives would be removed from the table, and the carver's work would be done by waiters at a sideboard.

Together with the carving-knife and carving-fork, other implements vanished from the table; the unsightly "rests" on which the carver reposed his weapons during the intermissions of his industry; and the long, pointed "steel" on which he sharpened his blade with clattering noise, like a butcher preparing to serve customers at his stall. These articles may, indeed, still be seen on the tables of old-fashioned folk; but they deserve mention in a work which will be popular reading long after they have become curious relics of past manners, and shall be found on collectors' shelves of social antiquities, by the side of snuff-bottles, decanter-slides, and tinder-boxes.

The Dutch fashion of placing men and women alternately at table having been adopted by our ancestors towards the close of the seventeenth century, it was not long ere the toils of carving passed from the gentler sex to more muscular hands. Retaining the honour of an office to which

she had imparted dignity, the lady of the house relinquished its labour to the men at her side; and together with the honour, she kept the seat which had been conceded to her as a handler of the great knife.

That her presence in that throne of honour contributes largely to the success of a dinner, Brillat-Savarin bore testimony with proper enthusiasm. The same critical epicure also maintained that whilst she gave splendour and animation to the repast, the luxuries of the table heightened her beauty and rendered her charms less perishable. “*La gourmandise,*” says the Frenchman, “*est favorable à la beauté.*” And he adds, “*Une suite d’observations exactes et rigoureuses a démontré qu’un régime succulent, délicat, et soigné repousse longtemps et bien loin les apparences extérieures de la vieillesse . . . il est également vrai de dire que, toutes choses égales, ceux qui savent manger sont comparativement de dix ans plus jeunes que ceux à qui cette science est étrangère.*”

Less gallant than the gastronomic lawyer, Grimod de la Reynière held that women were out of place in the company of feasting epicures, whose attention should not be diverted from beautiful things *on* to lovely creatures *at* the table. After coffee, the fair sex might resume their rights, which fell into abeyance during a grand meal. But fine gentleman

though he was, M. de la Reynière was a vulgarian at table, who did not blush to declare that ceremonious politeness should be banished from the festal board. "Toutes les cérémonies," he says, "lorsqu'on est à table vont toujours au détriment du dîner. Le grand point c'est de manger chaud, proprement, long-temps, et beaucoup."

Whilst Brillat-Savarin wished woman to participate in the finer pleasures of the table, in order that she should enhance and preserve her beauty, Louis Eustache Ude, whilom chef to Louis XVI. and the Earl of Sefton, urged that the young ladies of noble houses should be brought at early age to their parent's tables, for the education of their palates, and for the development of gastronomic taste. Even more than from the English fog, which depressed his spirits, and from the prejudices of the English physicians, who held his art in contempt bordering on abhorrence, Ude suffered from the coldness and indifference which the women of our aristocracy exhibited to his special pursuit. Alike in *gourmandise* and *friandise*,* he found them deficient in sensibility

* La gourmandise est une préférence passionnée, raisonnée, et habituelle pour les objets qui flattent le goût. La gourmandise est ennemie des excès; tout homme qui s'indigère ou s'enivre court risque d'être rayé des contrôles. La gourmandise comprend aussi la friandise, qui n'est autre que la même préférence appliquée aux mets légers, délicats, de peu de volume, aux confitures, aux pâtisseries, etc. C'est une modification introduite en faveur des femmes et des

and enthusiasm. "The ladies of England," he wrote towards the close of his beneficent career, "are unfavourably disposed to our art; yet I find no difficulty in assigning the cause of it. It is particularly the case with them (and indeed it is so in some measure with our own sex) that they are not introduced to their parents' table till their palates have been completely benumbed by the strict diet observed in the nursery and boarding-schools."

Since Louis Eustache Ude wrote thus feelingly on a subject for deep regret, the culinary education of our womankind, instead of improving, has greatly deteriorated. Whilst their organs of taste are still torpefied by a restricted diet, consisting chiefly of mutton and bread and butter, our gentle girls receive no systematic instruction in cookery and the mysteries of the kitchen, in the period of expanding intelligence that intervenes between scholastic discipline and marriage. Whatever fragmentary knowledge they possess of these high matters, has been picked up at rout-suppers and clandestine visits to the housekeeper's room. Their grandmothers seldom survived their teens without acquiring at least a superficial acquaintance with the theory and practice of the "generous art." But now-a-days not *hommes qui leur ressemblent.*"—*Vide BRILLAT-SAVARIN's "PHYSIOLOGIE DU GOUT."*

one young gentlewoman in a hundred can make an omelette or cook a *sole au gratin*. Misfortune has attended several attempts to establish seminaries for the sufficient instruction of womankind in the affairs of the table. The change of fashion, which degraded carving from the rank of the elegant accomplishments, gave the *coup de grâce* to the Beak Street Academy, where, so late as thirty years since, a young lady on the eve of her marriage might acquire the art of cutting meat, in a course of twelve lessons, at a guinea a lesson, exclusive of the cost of the viands on which she operated. A similar fate befell the Berners Street School of Cookery, which gave its grandest dinner on the day that saw Alexandra of Denmark pass through London on her triumphal way to Windsor and wedlock. The South Kensington School of Cookery opened under fairer auspices, but hitherto Professor Buckmaster's zeal and ability have barely preserved it from the failure which usually follows ridicule.

CHAPTER XI.

FORKS AND NAPERY.

"Here I will mention a thing that might have been spoken of before in the discourse of the first Italian towne. I observed a custome in all those Italian cities and townes through which I passed, that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels, neither do I thinke that any other nation of Christendome doth use it, but only Italy. The Italian, and also most strangers that are commorant in Italy, do alwaies at their meates use a little forke when they cut their meat. For while with their knife which they hold in one hand, they cut the meate out of the dish, they fasten their forke, which they hold in the other hand, upon the same dish; so that whatsoever he be that sitteth in the company of any others at meals, should unadvisedly touch the dishe of meate with his fingers from which all at the table doe cut, he will give occasion of offence unto the company, as having transgressed the lawes of good manners, insomuch that for his error he shalle be at least brow-beaten if not reprehended in wordes. This form of feeding, I understand, is generally used in all places of Italy; their forkes being for the most of yron or steele, and some silver, but those are used only by gentlemen. The reason of their curiosity is, because the Italian cannot by any means indure to have his dish touched with fingers, seeing that all men's fingers are not alike cleane. Hereupon I myselfe thought good to imitate the Italian fashion by this forked cutting of meate, not only while I was in Italy, but also in Germany, and oftentimes in England since I came home, being once quipped for that frequent using of my forke by a certain learned gentleman, a familiar friend of mine, one Mr. Lawrence Whitaker, who in his merry humour doubted not to call me *Furcifer* only for using a fork at feeding, but for no other cause."—*Vide Thomas Coryate's "CRUDITIES."*

"**F**INGERS were made before forks," says the familiar adage that had its origin in the warm disdain with which our ancestors of the

seventeenth century repudiated the Italian table-fork as a fantastic and even impious contrivance. The ancient people of the world fingered their cooked meat, and it was only at a quite recent date that the modern peoples adopted the pronged tool by which we convey food to the mouth without soiling the hand.

Products of necessity, the first culinary forks were devised for the benefit of artistes bent on withdrawing sodden flesh from a boiling cauldron. The Greek *creagra*—a staff, fitted at the lower end with a hook, or with prongs that bore a distant resemblance to human fingers—was a rude pot-fork, which, though greatly serviceable to cooks, would have been of no convenience to a reclining gourmand. Possessing several varieties of this kitchen tool, the Romans, notwithstanding their care for the caprice as well as for the comfort of epicurean feasters, never produced a table fork, though it was more needed by the ancient, whose recumbent posture deprived him of the use of one arm, than by the mediævalist who, sitting at meat, could serve his mouth with both hands. Caylus and Grignon, indeed, maintain that table-forks were not absolutely unknown to the imperial gastronomers ; but their opinion, which never had the testimony of sufficient facts, has been altogether discredited. Had the luxurious Romans been users of forks,

some specimens of the implement would certainly have been found in the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii.

But though they fed themselves with their fingers, it must not be imagined that the mediævalists were altogether fork-less. Forty years since, a fork of Anglo-Saxon manufacture was discovered in Wiltshire, under circumstances which leave no room for doubt that it was made at least as early as the later part of the ninth century. Another Anglo-Saxon fork, described in Akerman's *Pagan Saxondom*, is a bone-handled implement that some foppish Thane may have used to the mingled surprise and contempt of his simpler acquaintances. And from that period to the close of the Tudor time, there is evidence that our ancestors had a few forks, long before they were commonly placed on the English table, and regarded as necessary articles of furniture. Queen Elizabeth had at least three forks, one of "crystal, garnished with gold, and sparks of garnets; another of coral, slightly garnished with gold; and a third of gold garnished with two little rubies, two little pearls pendant, and a little coral." But it is obvious that these daintily set and jewelled tools were never meant for serious use. Presents from courtiers who sought her royal smile with gifts curious for their costly whimsicalness, her Highness re-

garded them as toys for the casket, or cabinet, rather than as tools for the table. She may have used one of them to pick a sweetmeat or a candied fruit from a dish of syrup; but it certainly never occurred to her to put them into gobbets of venison, or the breast of a Michaelmas goose. To the last, whether eating in public or private, the virgin-queen fingered her victuals, and would have imputed sheer madness to any courtier who had prophesied that, ere another century had passed, no queen of England would be able to do likewise without rousing the disgust of all beholders of her incivility. As for her fair cousin, Mary of Scotland—that paragon of feminine delicacy and winsomness to manufacturers of historical romance—it is probable that her little head fell from her neck, ere her eyes had seen even a toy-fork.

Whilst the spoon was the only implement used in feeding the mouth, entertainers were not required to provide the guest with one. Whether he came for a month or a day, to a series of banquets or a single repast every guest always brought his spoon in his pocket. Never travelling without the implement, which was as universal a piece of personal equipment as a watch is at the present time, the modish man of olden England no sooner found himself seated at a

strange board than, taking his spoon-case from its place of concealment, he exhibited the spoon, which had usually been given him by one of his baptismal sponsors. It was the same with women and children. When everyone used a spoon, and hosts seldom thought of providing spoons, the spoon was a piece of portable property that went wherever its owner went.*

As to shape, the most common was the apostle spoon, *i.e.*, the spoon whose handle was fashioned in the likeness of one of the apostles. Spoons so made were usually given at christenings by spiritual parents to their spiritual children; richer sponsors giving an entire set of twelve spoons, whilst the less opulent or liberal god-parent gave a set of four, or a single spoon. The gift, besides being typical of the material abundance which the sponsor of course desired for the child of grace, and being fashioned so as to remind him in after years at every meal of his religious obligations, was also an eminently useful present in the days when

* Only a few years since it was usual with the keepers of boarding-schools to require each of their pupils to bring a spoon, or a spoon and fork, for his or her special use. This practice, still maintained in a few old-fashioned schools, is the "survival" of the once universal fashion that required guests to bring their own table implements to their entertainer's board. As spoons became cheaper and more plentiful, the custom became less and less general; and at present its observance, even amongst school-children, is not common.

to go spoonless was nearly tantamount to going supperless, since the person without a spoon in his wallet was likely to fare badly even at a liberal table. Such good reasons cannot be urged in defence of the conventional christening present in these days, when spoons of secular pattern are still given at the font to children who are never expected to use them on arriving at years of discretion. Now-a-days, the customary offering of a spoon is the mere "survival" (as an excellent social writer would term it) of a usage that was convenient and practically beneficial when spoons were not abundant in every household. The same may be said of the silver "mug," a gift which, when handsome drinking vessels were not easily attainable, proved a most useful possession to the Christian, who, having acquired it in infancy from a godfather, used it daily through his adult life for caudle, wine, or ale.

Spoons were made of several materials. In the rich or fairly prosperous circles they were usually of silver, which was sometimes gilt. But for folk of the poorer sort, spoons were made of tinned iron, horn, wood, and other cheap stuff. "I'll give him a dozen latten spoons, and thou shalt translate them," Shakespeare is said to have remarked to Ben Jonson, when about to stand godfather to one of his fellow-poet's children, making a pun, whose

badness does not strengthen the credibility of an apocryphal story. Spoons of tinned iron were called latten spoons. The meanest of all spoons was the wooden spoon. And it is worthy of remark that this cheapest of table implements has, like the spoon of precious metal, given us a pungent and long-lived adage.

To say of a man, "He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth," was equivalent to calling him a prosperous fellow, whose good fortunes commenced at his very birth, when he had a sponsor rich enough to give him a silver spoon. And the meaning of the apt words was extended so as to cover all the favourites of fortune whose good estate, in no respect consequent on their own merits, came to them in the cradle from the benevolence of other persons. To remark of a man that "he had always fed himself with the wooden spoon," implied that he was a person of no account, who at any banquet would of course sit "below the salt" with inferior company, and fill himself with the poorer fare, as became a guest armed only with a spoon of wood. When it had passed from general folk-lore, this saying won a special significance at the universities. At Cambridge, to this day, the occupant of the lowest place in the mathematical tripos is termed "the wooden spoon," *i.e.*, is rated as a scholar who, when feasting at the table of knowledge, sat with the users of

wooden spoons, and was only allowed to help himself to the poorer fare of the *hoi polloi*, below the salt. *A propos* of this mention of the salt, it may be observed that the word, when applied to the choicest persons of company, had a twofold meaning. Besides implying that they gave flavour and piquancy to the social mess, it also intimated that they were the proper occupants of the higher places above the great salt-cellars.

Our ancestors were still feeding themselves without forks, on fare something more massive and heavy than the food of the mediæval cuisine, when, in the time of James the First, it entered the head of a Somersetshire squire to pack his traps, and start for a five months' tour in “France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia, commonly called the Grisons country, Helvetia, *alias* Switzerland, some parts of Germany and the Netherlands.” It was a time when English gentlemen seldom visited the Continent for pleasure. The Reformation had put an end to the pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem, which made travellers of so many of the English folk of our Catholic period. Many years had also passed since English men and women had fled from the Marian inquisitors to Switzerland and the Low Countries. It was not yet the mode with British parents to send their “youngsters of quality,” under the guardianship of reverend bear-leaders

for “the grand tour;” and the newest kind of modern “tourism,” with its railways and steam-boats, was the unimagined fashion of a distant future.

When Tom Coryate declared his purpose to see the world on the other side of the English Channel, and even to work his way to Italy, there was a stir in “the hungry aire of Odcombe, in the county of Somerset.” Tom’s neighbours were alarmed for his health, his morals, his religion. If he were not caught by the Jesuits and won over to idolatry, he would return to Somersetshire with vicious manners and a broken constitution. But their expostulations were in vain. Like other wilful men, Mr. Coryate took his own way ; and the consequences to society were noteworthy.

An epicure and lover of sights, Mr. Coryate partook freely of foreign dishes, whilst he gathered materials for his delightful narrative of travel. At Cremona he ate frogs with gust. He drank wine from the famous Heidelberg cask. At Venice he saw without disapprobation women on the stage of the principal theatre—“a thing,” he remarks, “that I never saw before, though I have heard that it hath been sometimes used in London, and they performed it with as good a grace, action, and gesture, and whatever convenient for a player, as ever I saw any masculine actor.” He saw other

ladies, whose vocation was even more questionable than that of the she-actors, and whose *chopines* (high-heeled shoes) appeared to him worthy of especial notice. But of all the Southern novelties, none delighted him more completely than the Italian fork, the Italian fan, and the Italian umbrella.

It was left for Jonas Hanway, in the middle of the following century, to emulate the courage of Thomas Coryate, and repeat his triumph over popular prejudice, in the eventually successful battle for the sunshade and the *parapluie*. But to Coryate belongs the honour of laying forks on the English table. It may not be imagined, however, that the innovation was accomplished without strenuous opposition. Apt at times to wax furious about trifles, English society was pricked by the pronged tool into a rage of contemptuous indignation which it is impossible to recall without a smile. Whilst the pulpit denounced, and the stage derided the new instrument, the sages of the fireside—forgetting that fingers were made before knives and spoons, as well as before forks—pushed the novelty aside with disdainful words, placed at the opening of this chapter. To the delight of his hearers, an angry preacher maintained that to touch meat with a fork was to declare impiously that God's comfortable “creatures” were not

worthy of being touched by human hands. Pandering to the popular excitement, Beaumont and Fletcher seasoned one of their plays with a fling at the “fork-carving traveller,” whom Lawrence Whitaker had nicknamed “furcifer”—“only for using a forke at feeding, but no other cause,” says Coryate, who had enough Latin to know the precise meaning of the opprobrious designation. The fight between Furcifer and his foes was at its fiercest heat, when Fynes Morison in his “Itinerary,” advising all young travellers to avoid a bootless conflict, urged them, on “returning home, to lay aside the fork of Italy,” as well as “the affected gesture of France and all strange apparel.”

But though it delayed, such vehement intolerance could not prevent the adoption of a simple contrivance, that in course of time commended itself to nice feeders of either sex, and to all orderly persons. It had no effect whatever on Coryate, whose good-humour equalled his daring. Decried and repudiated by the well-dressed mob, he had no sooner endured a repulse than he renewed the charge with smiling face and shining steel. Fixing his fork, and rushing for the thousandth time on his adversary, he eventually thrust it between the teeth of “society.”

In his “Cosmography” (1652) Heylin alluded to “the use of silver forks which is by some of our

spruce gallants taken up of late;" and at the same time gentlewomen were admonished to use the fork in carving. By the close of Charles the Second's reign, forks, though still derided by hinds and artisans, were seen on all fairly furnished English tables.

In a museum of social curiosities a large cabinet might be filled with single specimens of the various forks, commonly used by our ancestors between the days of Anne and Victoria. There were forks with any number of prongs between two and six. Usually made of steel, they had handles of several materials, and half a hundred diversities of shape. Forks with green, yellow, and pink handles have disappeared, and the steel table-fork has become an almost obsolete thing in these days of sham silver. The few forks of Heylin's time were for the most part of silver. But the silver fork was somewhat rare till the opening of the present century. As the type of inferior gentility, it was used by the satirists of George the Fourth's time to designate the school of super-genteel writers who fifty years since described the beau-monde which they knew only by report. The "silver-fork school" was contemporaneous with, and closely related to, the "Rosa Matilda" school of novelist. So late as thirty years since, the introducers of the silver fork amongst our provincial commonalty encountered no little opposition.

"Waiter, take away that thing and bring me a fork," a fox-hunting squire once said in our hearing at a hunt-dinner. The thing he contemptuously rejected was a silver fork.

The fork did much for the simplification and advancement of the national cuisine by encouraging the taste for solid viands and natural flavours, that had been becoming more and more general since the days of Elizabeth, who, holding the ancient "gallimawfreys" in low esteem, liked a "cut of roast" above all things. The "delicate slice" was a thing unknown to the mediæval epicures, who fingered their "gobbets," or spooned their "dices" of meats, that to be justly appreciated should be eaten in dainty slivers, thin as silk and light as gossamer. The beef of Old England never had its proper honour until the fork enabled the carver to cut it properly.

The fork had also notable effects on the equipment and manners of the English table. The piquant author of "The Art of Dining," remarks of the Roman epicures, "It is quite frightful to think how they must have slobbered their long beards and togas, in conveying food from the table to the mouths without forks . . . and it is difficult to conceive how they could manage to drink at all, unless they sat up as the goblet was passed to them." Our mediæval ancestors had a great advan-

tage over the Romans in their adoption of a posture that left both hands free for action. But one part of Mr. Hayward's animadversion on the Apician gourmands is applicable to the English "quality" of all times, prior to the general use of the pronged tool. Dining in olden England must have been a distressingly sloppy process, when the rude feaster grabbed the choicest bits from dishes brimming with thick gravy, and the nicest feeder, after taking a gobbet of flesh, dipped it into the sauce-bowl before he carried the dripping morsel over the table-cloth to his lips. During the prevalence of such manners, the noble dame or damoiselle was commended for exemplary breeding, who dipped only the tips of her fingers in the sauce-dish, and contrived to eat her dinner without letting fragments of meat fall from her lips upon the table-cloth. Chaucer says of Madame Eglantine, the exemplary Prioress,

"At mete was she wele ytaughte withalle;
She lette no morsel from her lippes falle,
Ne wette hire fingeres with her sauce depe.
Wel coulde she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fell upon hire brest.
In curtesie was sette full moche hire lest,
Hire over-lippe wiped she so clene,
That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene
Of grese, when she dronken hadde hire draught.
Ful semely after hire mete she raught."

So long as she did not plunge her hand deep in the gravy, the poet admitted her right to thrust her sop in the pan, even though she greased the tips of her fingers in doing so.

A better novelist than antiquary, Alexander Dumas committed a prodigious blunder in the "Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine," when he asserted that table-cloths and napkins were unknown in France much before the 13th century. "Le linge," wrote the daring and indiscreet Alexandre, "surtout le beau linge, ne fit que très tard son apparition en France. La propreté est le résultat, et non le présage, de la civilisation. Nos belles dames du XIII^e. et du XIV^e. siècle, aux pieds desquelles s'age-

* Alexandre is less unfortunate in telling an old story to illustrate a use to which the napkin was often put by angry gentlemen at table-quarrels. "Alors s'établit," he says, "en France un usage singulier, celui de couper la nappe devant eux qu'on voulait défier ou à qui on voulait faire un reproche de bassesse ou de lâcheté. Charles VI., le jour de l'Epiphanie, avait à table plusieurs convives illustres, parmi lesquels se trouvait Guillaume de Hainault, comte d'Ostrevant. Tout-à-coup un héraut vint trancher la nappe devant le comte, en lui disant qu'un prince qui ne portait pas d'armes n'était pas digne de manger à la table du roi, Guillaume répondit que, comme les autres seigneurs, il portait l'écu, la lance, et l'épée. 'Non, sire,' répondit le héraut, 'cela est impossible ; car votre oncle a été tué par les Frisons, et jusqu'à ce jour cependant sa mort est restée impunie ; certes, si vous possédiez des armes, il y a longtemps qu'il serait vengé.' To cast a gauntlet at a man was to declare him an enemy to be fought: to throw a napkin at him was to intimate that he was a dirty fellow who needed washing.

nouillèrent les Galaor, les Amadis, et les Lancelot du Lac, il faut bien avouer, non-seulement n'avaient pas de chemise la plupart du temps, mais ne les connaissaient point. Les nappes, déjà employées du temps d'Auguste, avaient disparu et n'étendirent sur nos tables leur blanche surface que vers le XIII^e. siècle, et encore seulement chez les princes et chez les rois."

The Roman cuisine necessitated the continual use of napkins. The Augustan dandies were fanciful about their hand-towels, which were often stolen from their owners by such parasites as Hermogenes who, at a banquet without napkins, gratified his kleptomaniacal propensity by running off with the table-cloth.

"Attulerat mappam nemo, dum furta timentur,
Mantile e mensâ surpuit Hermogenes.

Another stealer of napkins was the Asinius whom Catullus handed over to comical infamy. In "The Last Days of Pompeii," Lord Lytton called attention to the napkins of delicate linen with purple fringe, which Glaucus provided for his friends, and to the ediles special napkin, which he drew forth with the ostentation of a rich *parvenu*.

The peoples, who adopted the Apician code after the fall of Rome, were no less particular in respect to their table-linen. Plebeians were of course con-

tent to lick their fingers as well as their platters; but mediæval “society,” alike in its earlier period and strictly feudal time, never grudged the cost of clean board-cloths and towels. The Anglo-Saxons spread their tables with pure napery; and from the Conquest to the era of the English Stuarts, our forefathers of the higher grades used table-linen lavishly, and made much parade of washing before and after meat. The sloppiness of their repasts forbade them to do otherwise. We have already seen how, in feudal England, the surnappe was put over the laid table, and how the lord laved his hands in assayed water, on the removal of the sur-cloth. At the conclusion of the meal, the spoons and dishes having been removed, the surnappe was drawn over the soiled table-cloth, when the satisfied feasters washed from their lips and hands the uncleanness which they had necessarily contracted during the banquet. It was the special office of the ewerer and his subordinates to provide lavers and linen for this purpose.

In these times of no forks and much washing at meat, the napkin, as a thing to be used rather than trifled with, was produced in a form convenient to the feaster actually needing it. The case was otherwise when the fork had made eating a pastime from which a fairly careful feeder could retire without wishing to cleanse his hands. No longer a necessity,

the napkin became a mere ornament and thing of ceremony; and in their desire to use it for decorative effect, the article which was no longer required for positive cleanliness, the Restoration chefs displayed curious ingenuity in folding it in new ways.

Charles the Second's favourite artiste, Giles Rose, the chef who succeeded to Robert May's honours and prophetic mantle, gave his "officers of the mouth" minute instructions for folding dinner napkins in twenty-six different fashions. On referring to the "Perfect School of Instructions for Officers of the Mouth, by Giles Rose, one of the Master-Cooks In His Majestie's Kitchen" (1682), the reader may learn how,

1. To frise a napkin.
2. To fold a napkin in bands.
3. To pleat a napkin in the form of a cockle-shell double.
4. To do the same single.
5. To pleat or fold a napkin in the form of a double melon.
6. To fold a napkin in the form of a melon single.
7. To fold a napkin in the fashion of a cock.
8. To pleat a napkin in the form of a hen.
9. To fold and pleat a napkin in the form of a hen and chickens.

10. To fold a napkin like two pullets.
11. To fold a napkin in the form of a pigeon upon her nest in a basket.
12. To pleat a napkin in the form of a partridge.
13. To pleat a napkin in the form of a pheasant.
14. To fold a napkin in the form of two capons in a pye.
15. To fold a napkin like a hare.
16. To fold a napkin like two rabbits.
17. To fold a napkin like a sucking pig.
18. To fold a napkin like a dog with a "choller" about his neck.
19. To fold a napkin like a pike.
20. To fold a napkin in the form of a carp.
21. To fold a napkin like a turbot.
22. To fold a napkin like a mitre.
23. To fold a napkin like a turkey.
24. To fold a napkin like a tortoise.
25. To fold a napkin in the fashion of a cross, like the Order of the Holy Ghost.
26. To make the cross of Lorraine.

In Ben Jonson's "Devil's an Ass" (Act. V., scene 4), Meercraft speaks of

"The laudable use of forks,
Brought into custom here as they are in Italy,
To the sparing of napkins."

So early was it seen that the adoption of the fork would spare napkins, by greatly diminishing the

need for them. And forks had not been for many years in use ere they had the effect predicted by the dramatist. Napkins disappeared from the tables of economical housekeepers, who, before the introduction of the fork, would have deemed them indispensable for decency and cleanliness. And the few, still placed on more sumptuous tables, showed by their fantastic and complicating foldings that they were exhibited only for ornament. To “undo” a napkin folded like a turkey was to destroy a work of art; and in Charles the Second’s time the young spark who was guilty of such a demolition of a beautiful object, would have offended his host, whilst infuriating his host’s butler.

Napkins were retiring before the victorious forks, when, in an early year of Charles the Second’s *actual* reign, Samuel Pepys went to the Guildhall banquet mentioned in the last chapter. His place was at the Merchant-strangers’ table, and, on seeing it unprovided with napkins, he was disposed to impute the *strange* omission to his entertainer’s niggardliness and incivility. “At noon,” he wrote in his Journal, “I went to Guildhall, and, meeting with Mr. Proby, Sir R. Ford’s son, and Lieutenant-Colonel Baron, a city commander, we went up and down to see the tables, where, under every salt, there was a bill of fare, and at the end of the table the persons proper for the table. Many were the

tables, but none in the Hall, but the Mayor's and the Lords of the Privy Council, that had napkins or knives, which was very strange." A few years later young Mr. Pepys would have seen nothing remarkable in this distinction between the chief and ordinary tables. And even in 1663 he would have been less surprised at it, had he known the town as well as he knew it after a longer study of its humours.

He had, of course, entered the Hall with his best spoon and spoon-case in his pocket. Already priding himself on his modishness, he was doubtless provided with a fork, an implement which every velvet-wearing gallant by that time carried to private banquet or public ordinary. For the absence of knife and napkin he could have accounted readily, had he been aware of the change of fashion with respect to those articles. While napkins were falling into comparative disuse, it was becoming more and more usual for the "diner-out" to carry on his person a case fitted with a knife as well as with a fork and spoon. Sir Antony Bateman, the Lord Mayor, was no mere citizen in high office. Belonging to a gentle family, that moved in the brightest circles of the town, he affected the newest fashions, and had probably ordered his butler to set the table in West-End style. The chief servant may be presumed to have withheld the napkins from the in-

ferior tables in obedience to some such order. He also forbore to lay knives, because he assumed, in his politeness, that the gentlemen of the city would bring their own case-knives, and would rather use them than such old-fashioned weapons as were stored in the buttery of the Guildhall. The liberality of the fare provided for the Merchant-strangers forbids us to attribute the absence of napkins to parsimony. Pepys admits that each mess at his table had "ten good dishes," with "plenty of wine of all sorts." Nor is the imputation of stinginess sustained adequately by the fact that the dishes were "wooden," and the drinking vessels of earthenware. Plate was scarce in England so soon after the Civil war, which had brought thousands upon thousands of silver spoons, tankards, and dishes to the melting-pot. And the civic store-rooms had no sufficient supply of glass for several hundreds of feasters, when the gentlemen of the Inns of Court were wont to eat off wooden trenchers and drink from pots of wood or earth. The cost of the banquet being some £800, a sum equal to £7000 of modern money, Pepys' insinuations of niggardliness were absurdly groundless.

The last diner-out to bring his own knife, fork, and spoon to an epicure's table was Mr. Pelham, the record of whose doings in the world of fashion was one of Lord Lytton's earliest literary achieve-

ments. Every reader of "Pelham" remembers how the hero of that capital novel exhibited his case and its tools to the delighted Lord Guloseton. "It contains," he said, eloquently, to the noble *bon-vivant*, "my spoon, my knife, my fork. Nature afflicted me with a propensity which, through these machines, I have endeavoured to remedy by art. I eat with too great a rapidity. It is a most unhappy failing; for one often hurries over in *one* minute what ought to have afforded the fullest delight for the period of *five*. It is, indeed, a vice which deadens enjoyment, as well as abbreviates it; it is a shameful waste of the gifts, and a melancholy perversion of the bounty of Providence. My conscience tormented me; but the habit, fatally indulged in early childhood, was not easy to overcome. At last I resolved to construct a spoon of peculiarly shallow dimensions, a fork so small that it would only raise a certain portion to my mouth, and a knife rendered blunt and jagged, so that it required a proper and just time to carve the goods 'the gods provide me.' My lord, 'the lovely Thais sits beside me' in the form of a bottle of Madeira. Suffer me to take wine with you."

Of course Lord Guloseton accepted the challenge graciously, and, forming a favourable opinion of so excellent a young gentleman, was ready to take his

advice on politics and other matters less important than eating and drinking.

Generally discarded from fashionable tables at the close of the eighteenth century, the napkin was seldom used or seen by the more modish epicures of Horace Walpole's era. "En Angleterre," says the author of "L'Art Culinaire," "tout le monde est rentré à trois heures, et l'on sert le dîner chez le négociant et le bourgeois; car chez les grands on ne dîne qu'à quatre heures. Une nappe qui descend jusqu'à terre couvre la table; il n'y a point de serviettes. Ce qui forme le couvert est ordinairement une fourchette à manche rond avec deux points d'acier, et un couteau dont la lame, large et arrondie, peut, dans le besoin, remplacer la cuillère; on en change à chaque service. Au dessert on enlève la nappe, et l'on sert à chacun un plus petit couvert, une jale de verre pour se laver les mains, et une serviette carrée, extrêmement petite. Après le dessert, qui n'est jamais long, vient *le boire*, que les Anglais préfèrent à tout, et les dames disparaissent." Whence it appears that in George the Third's time the dessert doily was regarded as the elegant and sufficient substitute for the old table-towel, and that the handler of a two-pronged steel fork might use his knife as a spoon. Four-pronged silver forks had come into general use before the

epicure was forbidden to put his knife into his mouth.

In these later years of universal luxury the full-sized white napkin is seen on every table, set for English folk who take their meals comfortably. Whether it should be rated more highly as an adornment, or a requisite for cleanliness, is a question that each reader may decide for himself. No critic of the festal board will underrate its decorative importance. On the other hand, everyone will admit that, though less needful than in ancient time, it is a convenient and useful article of table furniture. The author of "Autres Contenances de Table" admonishes the apprentice in good breeding not to twist his dinner napkin into a cord.

"De ta touaille ne fais corde
Honnesteté ne s'y accorde."

Nervous and fidgetty gentlemen may still be found to whom this counsel should be repeated. These torturers of the napkin, when they have no occasion to use, should refrain from abusing it, so that it becomes as unsightly as a crumpled newspaper or a piece of hay-rope.

CHAPTER XII.

HORN, BELI, AND GONG.

"L'homme reçut de son estomac, en naissant, l'ordre de manger au moins trois fois par jour, pour réparer les forces que lui enlèvent le travail et, plus souvent encore, la paresse."—*Vide Alexandre Dumas's "DICTIONNAIRE DE CUISINE."*

"Braikfastis for my lorde and my ladye. Furst a loof of brede in trenchers, two manchets, one quart of bere, a quart of wine, half a chyne of muton, ells a chyne of beif boyled."—*Vide "NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSEHOLD Book," (1512.)*

"When foure houres be past after breakfast, a man may safely take his dinner, and the most convenient time for dinner is about eleven of the clocke before noone. . . . About foure houres, or sixe after we have dined, the time convenient for supper."—*Vide Thomas COGAN's "HAVEN OF HEALTH."*

"Que le mouvement de consommation soit modéré, le dîner étant la dernière affaire de la journée; et que les convives se tiennent comme des voyageurs qui doivent arriver ensemble au même but."—*Vide BRILLAT-SAVARIN's "PHYSIOLOGIE DU GOUT."*

RECOGNISING three kinds of appetite, and three kinds of *gourmandise*, Alexandre Dumas insists that man is instructed by nature to satisfy his craving for food at least three times a day.

The fiercest desire for food is the hunger of famine, which, to appease its pangs, devours raw flesh as greedily and thankfully as a roast pheasant or pullet. Such hunger is never experienced by the fortunate epicure, whose sharpest gust proceeds

from the gentle stimulus of the soup, oysters, or dainty *plat*, which rouses his gastronomic powers at the opening of a banquet. The finest of the three appetites is the transient revival of desire, which raises the scientific *gourmet* above the sensations of vulgar felicity when he regards an exquisite and specially-beloved delicacy at the close of a long repast. “Give me money to buy a loaf of bread, for I am very hungry,” the street-beggar implored of the Prince Regent. “Lucky fellow,” returned the Prince. “How many years have passed since I had the delight of a good appetite!” But the greatest gentleman and sensualist of modern England was a *bon-vivant* of the grosser sort. All great authorities on fine eating concur with the French novelist in the opinion that hunger paralyses the palate. The epicure should never bring an appetite to his table. Before satisfying it with food, he should create it by eating. The soup should call it into existence, the fish should quicken it, the entrées should raise it to the fulness of vigour, and, when it has been tranquilly allayed with substantial viands, the concluding *plat* should enable it to smile sportively as it dies away.

Just as there are three appetites, Dumas insists that there are three kinds of *gourmandise*. The first is the vehement sensuality, which becomes gluttony in its most repulsive manifestations, and

which theologians have placed amongst the seven deadly sins. It was the *gourmandise* of Vitellius. The second is the polite *gourmandise*, sung by Horace and glorified by Lucullus, which in these later times has been invested with mysteries, and raised to religious rank by the genius and labours of Grimod de la Reynière and Brillat-Savarin. Including *friandise*, the love of tit-bits, this highest gastrolatry enlarges the affections, stimulates the intellect, and inspires our race with lofty ambitions. In every respect dissimilar to this beneficent passion for delicate eating, the third *gourmandise* is even more revolting than the first. It is the morbid, insatiable, and incessant craving for heavy food, which is fully described, with stories too marvellous for credence, in Mason Good's "Study of Medicine." It attacked Brutus after the death of Cæsar; and M. Dumas has no doubt that Esau suffered from it when he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. "Ce fut sans doute," says Alexandre, "dans un accès de cette fatale maladie qu'Esaü vendit à Jacob son droit d'aînesse pour un plat de lentilles."

In the number of their meals, and also in their hours for taking them, the practice of the old English differed much less from modern usage than is ordinarily supposed. The difference consists chiefly in the relinquishment of a term, the shifting

of another, and the substitution of a third. When regard is had to the times at which our ancestors rose from, and went to, bed, the difference becomes so slight that it may be said to disappear altogether.

Like Alexandre Dumas, our forefathers were generally of opinion that nature, by the promptings of the stomach, ordered man to take food three times a-day. They held that on rising from his couch he required a slight "snack," to break the fast which had lasted throughout the hours of sleep; that he needed a substantial banquet some four hours after his breakfast; and that it was good for him to have a second sound repast some five or six hours after the first grand meal. Rising at about six o'clock, they breakfasted after making the toilet, dined at ten or eleven o'clock, and supped at five in the afternoon. Acting on the same rule, now that we rise later from bed, we breakfast at nine, lunch some four hours later, and dine about six hours after luncheon. The hour of leaving bed postpones all the daily meals in the "society," which breakfasts at ten, lunches at two or three, and dines at eight or nine. In this matter the moderns have done little more than relinquish the word "supper," shift to the third meal the name which our forefathers applied to the second, and, in place of the term taken from it, give to the second repast the inexpressive name of

luncheon. In addition to their three daily repasts, the more luxurious and indulgent of the old English had intermediate "snacks" called "nuntions" (afterwards "luncheons"), and "rear-suppers"—the former coming between breakfast and dinner, and the latter following supper by three or four hours. Hence it appears that the modern dinner is the old English supper, and that the late repast, still served under the name of supper at routs shortly after midnight, is, in fact, the rear-supper of feudal society.

In the social history of every people, luxury is seen to ebb and flow, fall and rise, like a tidal river. Indulgence begets a disposition for temperance, or even asceticism; and then severe moderation is followed by a reaction towards excess. This must be borne in mind. Whilst the Old English were usually in favour of three meals a day, there were times when the more temperate restrained themselves to two meals or even to one meal; and also times when the indulgent permitted themselves to enjoy four, five, or even six daily repasts. The Danes, under Canute the Hardy, are reported to have been eaters of five or six meals a day. Alike remarkable for general luxuriousness and occasional abstinence, the Normans, alternately denouncing and commanding rear-suppers, were by turns abstainers and gourmandizers.

It is remarkable that two of our best Elizabethan authorities on the table customs of their time deliver conflicting evidence concerning the meals of our ancestors towards the close of the sixteenth century. Whilst William Harrison bears witness that the English of his time were content with "dinner and supper onelie," Thomas Cogan, writing about the same time, speaks precisely of "breakefast, dinner, and supper" as the three regular daily meals of every well-kept Englishman. This discrepancy is doubtless due to the fact that though breakfast was the common indulgence of prosperous folk in Queen Elizabeth's days, it was not universally taken by all kinds of people. Hence, whilst Cogan, writing culinary notes for educated people, might fairly treat of breakfast as a meal of which all his readers partook, William Harrison, writing a survey of the general state of the people, might decline to notice as a regular repast what was only the superfluous daily regalement of the richer folk.

In the fifteenth century, breakfast was no set meal for inferior people. Edward the Fourth's exemplary mother was a breakfast-eater. "She taketh somethinge to recreate nature," says her biographer, "and so goeth to the chappell, hearing divine service and two lowe masses; from thence to dynner." But it was only to the chief officers of her household that she allowed the same indulgence.

"Breakfastes," the chronicler continues, "be there none, savinge onely the head offycers when they be present; to the ladyes and gentlewomen; to the deans and to the chappell; to the almoner; to the gentlemen-ushers; to the cofferer; to the clerks of the kytchin, and to the marshal."

Compassionating the state of our grandfathers, whose nightly indulgence in port and punch must have been followed by excruciating headaches in the morning, Mr. Thackeray asked pitifully and wonderfully what on earth they did for the mitigation of their torture, in the absence of soda water. Joe Sedley cooled his burning throat with mild beer; but the draught, which may have assuaged his heartburn, can scarcely have tranquillized his nerves, or been an anodyne to his throbbing head.

In these days of hot tea and deliciously aromatic coffee, the modern epicure is apt to wonder how our ancestors contrived to breakfast without either of the two fragrant and cheering drinks. His concern for their miserable condition will not be lessened by the assurance that, in the absence of tea and coffee, they drank beer and ale. Bread, salt fish, larded herrings, and sprats, washed down with beer and wine (on fish days), and bread, and mutton, or chine of boiled beef, diluted with the same drinks (on flesh days), were the regular breakfasts of the Earl and Countess of Northumberland, at the begin-

ning of Henry the Eighth's reign. The Earl's children breakfasted on like fare, only they had no wine in addition to their beer. As for the Countess's maids of honour, their caterer wrote thus :—“Breakfastys for my lady's gentylwomen. Item, a loif of housshold bred, a pottel of beire, and three mutton bonys boyled, or ells a pece of bief boyled.” How would any young gentlewoman of the present century like to exchange for such pot-house regale-ment her delicate breakfast picked from a table furnished with new laid eggs, lobster rissoles, cutlets in sharp sauce, game-pie, dainty rolls, a teapot full of choicest infusion, and a jug of scald-ing hot milk ready to be mixed with the black, fragrant decoction of coffee ?

In the “Merry Wives of Windsor” (Act iii., s. 3), Page says :—“I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast; after, we'll go a birding together: I have a fine hawk for the bush. Shall it be so?” The frequency of Shakespeare's allusions to breakfast demonstrates that the repast was common in Elizabethan England. But in the seven-teenth century breakfasts were seldom so substan-tial as those of the “Northumberland Household Book.” Towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, Thomas Cogan urged “all those that have a care for health” to make light breakfasts. “For break-fast, I thinke,” he says, in ‘The Haven of Health,’

"those meates be most convenient, especially for students, which be of light digestion, as milke, butter, egs, and such like." At the same time, William Harrison maintained that the early snack was only the affair of the "young hongrie stomach that cannot fast till dinner-time." That typical gentleman of Caroline England, the Duke of Newcastle, made his breakfast habitually on a manchet of fine bread and a glass of sack; and to the close of the seventeenth century the ordinary breakfast of a not indulgent Englishman was a slice of bread and a glass of ale, beer, or dry wine. Husbandmen took the early snack as they walked round their fields, or to their first spell of labour. In the towns and villages it was general for men of all social grades, from the squire to the petty tradesman, to get it at the nearest ale-house. The "morning draught" at the inn was, in fact, the ordinary breakfast of the majority of Englishmen from the days of bluff Henry, to the time when the taste for tea put an end to the early meetings at the public house, and caused our great grandfathers to breakfast leisurely at their own tables rather than in a crowded bar-parlour. Unless they bear this fact in mind, readers of old biographies are apt to attribute tavern haunting propensities to sober and discreet gentlemen who, though they always opened the day with

drink and gossip at an ale-house, were no wastrels or ill-livers.

The old names for the two chief meals of the day deserve attention. Supper, the repast at which men took soup, commemorates the importance of the part played by pottages and porridges in the cuisine of the Old English. Several suggestions have been made for a derivation for “dinner.” Dr. Doran, in his pleasant “Table Traits,” insists that the word is an abbreviation of “*dixième heure*,” ten o’clock, the usual hour for breakfast in Norman England. Whilst this explanation appears fanciful, and certainly imposes much work on the abbreviating process, it is (as the Doctor himself observes) irreconcileable with the fact that nine was a common dinner hour with England’s French nobility. A better suggestion of the same kind is that the familiar word is a contraction of *déjeuner*, the word still applied in France, not to the “early snack” (the *café-au-lait* and roll), but to the earlier of two chief meals. At one time the classical pedants insisted that “dinner” came from the Greek “*deipnon*.” But on reviewing all the derivations of the familiar term, provided by the ingenuity of etymologists and antiquaries, the readers of this page will be disposed to think the first *sound* meal of the day, eaten deliberately when workers in olden time ceased from their first spell of day’s labour, gained

its original name from the old French *disner* to cease from work. On this point Richardson says, “*Dine*, Fr. *Disner*; It. *Desinare*. Perhaps, as suggested by Minshew, from the Lat. *Desinere*, i.e., cessare, a cessatione ab operâ, to cease, the time of ceasing from labour.” Etymologists have in like manner racked their brains to find the derivation of the more modern word *luncheon*, or, as the Elizabethan writers usually spelt it, nunchion. Whilst some regard the term as coming from *longus* (*lonja*), and having references to long slices of cake; others would have us think that it is akin to *nooning*, and points to the proper hour for the meal of those who *shun* the full heat and shining sun of *noon*. Perhaps “moonshine” is the best comment on such talk about “noon-shun” and “noon-shine.”

The practice of Old England in respect to hours for mealing accorded with the practice of the other countries of feudal Europe. To avoid mistakes, the reader should bear in mind the old rule, which required dinner to be served for “quality” some four hours after the hour of leaving bed. The apparent disagreements of old chroniclers on an interesting subject disappear, when it is remembered that the time of quitting the couch varied with the seasons, and that the rule required the meal to be somewhat earlier in the summer than the winter. Rising later in the cold than in the warm months,

the Anglo-Norman gentry dined at nine in summer and ten in winter. It was the same in the Elizabethan period, people dining an hour earlier or later as the temperature induced them to rise early or lie late.

Alike in the Western and Eastern worlds, it was formerly a point of honour and modishness with great folk to dine before their social inferiors. When the Khan of Tartary had filled himself with mare's milk and horse-flesh, a herald used to proclaim daily that, "the omnipotent Khan having dined, all other potentates, princes, and great men of the earth might go to dinner." The great men having said grace after meat, the rabble might satisfy the cravings of hunger. On being asked what was the best hour for dining, Diogenes, never free from idlers bothering him with foolish questions, answered that a rich man should suit his pleasure, and a poor one seize his opportunity. In feudal England, whilst it pleased the nobility to dine as soon as they were hungry, gentle retainers found their earliest opportunity of dining when they had waited at table on their employers. Too modest to imitate lords and ladies, the merchants and traders of Elizabethan London took their meals at the feeding hours of courtly servitors. "With us," says William Harrison, "the nobilitie, gentrie, and students doo ordinarilie go to dinner at eleven

before noone, and to supper at five, or between five and six at afternoone. The merchants dine and sup seldome before twelve at noone and six at night, especiallie in London. The husbandmen dine also at high noone, as they call it, and sup at seven or eight ; but out of tearne in our universities the scholers dine at ten. As for the poorest sort, they generallie dine and sup when they may, so that to talke of their order of repast, it were but a needlesse matter.” Cogan says, “ But the usual time for dinner in the universities is eleven, or elsewhere about noone.” The same author puts the time for supper at six hours after dinner, “ which in the universities is about five of the clocke in the afternoone.” And he adds, “ But here ariseth a great question, whether a man should eat more at dinner than at supper. Learned doctors are divided on this subject.” Cogan was of opinion that, though the strong might take heavy suppers with impunity and even with profit, the delicate should sup lightly. The Elizabethan proverb, “ After dinner rest awhile, after supper walk a mile,” shows that our ancestors did not go to bed immediately after the second satisfying meal.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the dinner hour was gradually made later and later, until the meal called dinner was eaten at the Elizabethan supper hour. In the same way supper was

postponed to the hour of the old rear-supper ; and, dinner having been thus pushed off to the later part of the afternoon, the necessity arose for substantial luncheons. In the earlier half of George the Third's reign midday dinners were still permissible in good society, but three o'clock was a modish, and four the highly fashionable hour for dining. A French writer of the First Empire gives four o'clock as the fashionable hour for dinners in London. The great Napoleon's chancellor, and political dispenser of hospitality, had his dinners served at half-past five, and never failed to upbraid the guest who was five minutes after time. Five or half-past five was late enough to please Grimod de la Reynière, who concurred with Brillat-Savarin in holding that dinner should be so timed that the satisfied feaster, on leaving the table, should be ready for bed. By the close of the Farmer King's time, five was the usual dinner hour of great people in England. Dr. Kit-chiner, the famous medical epicure and author of the "Cook's Oracle," who died in 1827, was to the last served with dinner at that hour ; though before he retired for ever from his cosy house in Warren Street (43), Fitzroy Square, six was the dinner hour of Mayfair. In his "Apician Morsels" (1829), Dick Humelberguis Secundus names six o'clock as the time for dinner in good society, both in town and country.

But whatever the hour for dinner, all authorities agree that it should be observed scrupulously alike by host, cook, and guests. Brillat-Savarin declares of all qualities requisite in a cook exactitude is the most indispensable. The chef, exact in all his operations, should be especially so in respect to time. To ensure this accuracy, Kitchiner insisted that every dining-room should be furnished with a clock, that kept time with another good clock ticking over the fire-place of the kitchen. But with all his care for punctuality, the Doctor declared that dinner had better be a few minutes late than that a dish should be served underdone, or, even worse, overdone. "The first consideration," he observes, "must still be that the dinner 'be well done, when 'tis done.' It is a common fault with cooks, who are over anxious about time, to over-dress everything. The guests had better wait than the dinner. A little delay will improve their appetite; but if the dinner waits for the guests, it will deteriorate every minute." In fact, the punctuality of guests was chiefly desirable, in order that the dinner should not suffer from being "kept back," when ready to be served.

With the clear common sense, never wanting in intelligent voluptuaries, Brillat-Savarin maintained that for a host "to wait too long for a tardy guest was to be failing in proper respect for those who

are present." A fine epicure, as well as a great lawyer, Lord Lyndhurst was of the same opinion. He had no mercy for man or woman who had so little consideration for others as to trifle with a chef's reputation, and the natural cravings of a fasting company by want of punctuality. During his third tenure of the Seals, it was the affectation of "the town" to be late for dinner. In his determination that "the fashion" should not interfere with his comfort and the happiness of his more sensible friends, the Chancellor ordered his porter to bar the hall door when five minutes had passed over the appointed dinner hour, and not to open it again for any purpose whatever till dinner was at an end. The order was obeyed implicitly without respect to persons; and a few great people having been thereby rightly punished for their little foolishness, gentlemen, who could not be punctual at any other house in town, soon showed themselves precisely attentive to the most important requirement of the Lord Chancellor's invitations.

To ensure proper punctuality in the members of his household, and in guests tarrying under his roof, the prudent chief of an establishment never fails to give due warning of the approach and arrival of the dinner-hour. To effect this he has the choice of three instruments, the horn, the bell, and the gong. For the gong we are indebted to

the nabobs who a century or more since used to return from eastern lands with vast wealth, and tempers too irritable to endure any disrespect for their gastronomic needs. The old-fashioned nabob who swore incessantly, and talked mysterious gibberish with a swarthy valet, kept curricles by the score, and on dying of liver-disease sometimes left his money to the heroine of the last new novel, is no longer with us. He has been replaced by a much less gorgeous and choleric Anglo-Indian, who subsists on a moderate pension, and seldom leaves much wealth to his children. But his gong and chutnee are still with us, to stun our ears on the approach, and to warm our stomachs during the progress, of dinner. For a century before the introduction of the gong, the bell was the only instrument used for summoning the hungry to dinner. But in more distant time the ecclesiastical tintinnabulum was rarely used for so profane a purpose. Instead of heralding the advent of meals with "ringsion," as Jeremy Bentham used to term the music of a ringing bell, the feudal English, like their contemporaries of the Continent, gathered feasters to the smoking board with a concert of trumpets and drums, or with blasts from a single horn. The music of huntsmen running in upon their quarry, was the music which declared the venison and wild-boar ready

for the trenchers. Blown to announce the coming of dinner and supper, the horn was also wound to celebrate the virtue of particular dishes. The nobler creatures of the chase were seldom brought to table without notes from the trumpet. The same musical honours were also accorded to the grander birds and fishes—the peacock and swan, the sturgeon and turbot, when served in their entirety, being usually introduced with flourishes from the musicians in attendance. “Au XVII^e siècle,” says Alexandre Dumas, mentioning a usage of several earlier centuries, as well as the seventeenth age, “c'est-à-dire à l'époque où l'on dînait à midi, le cor, dans les grandes maisons, annonçait le moment du dîner. De là une locution perdue; on disait, ‘Cornez le dîner.’”

“Cornet the dinner,” was the feudal equivalent of the modern and more familiar phrase, “ring for dinner.” And in days when inferior people ate little meat in the winter months save salted beef, the more usual form of the order was “cornez le bœuf,” or “corn the beef.” Hence the viand, which during the long winters occasioned so much trouble to the sore gums of menials suffering from the scurvy, was called “corn-beef,” i.e., the only beef that for months together was trumpeted to table. Richardson errs egregiously when he insists that *corned beef* derived its distinguishing

epithet from the grains or corns of salt with which it was pickled. Corned beef is trumpeted beef, or, as we should now-a-days say, dinner-bell beef. Though the university was rich in bells that might have called the hungry, the dinner-horn was blown daily in several of the halls and colleges of Lardian Oxford. To this day the lawyers of the Middle Temple are “horned in” to dinner. Apropos of these notes of horn-music, it may be remarked that before they adopted the louder and more effective bell, the directors of our earliest railways—following the practice of the coaches—summoned the passengers to their trains by the trumpet.

If it is bad for guests to be late, it is far worse for a host to delay his appearance beyond the appointed hour. In the latter case the culprit's remissness inflicts embarrassment, and possibly suffering, on an entire assembly of persons, for whose pleasure he is bound by honour to be solicitous, so long as they are under his roof. If the tardy guest deserves censure, what punishment is due to the offender who only begins his toilet as the last visitor enters the drawing-room?

In the “Physiologie du Goût” Brillat-Savarin gives a comically-agonizing picture of the tortures which he endured whilst waiting four hours for dinner in the salon of the Arch-Chancellor Cam-

bacérès. The first Napoleon was in the plenitude of his power when the Chancellor, whose “dinners” were a powerful element of the Imperial system, invited Monsieur Brillat-Savarin to assist at a ceremonious banquet. When the guests arrived, there was no host to bid them welcome. The clock pointed to half-past five, the time fixed for the dinner, and still the Chancellor was conspicuous by his absence. Demanding punctuality from others, and ever ready to censure vehemently any want of it in his friends, he was, of all great hosts, the last who should have offended so signally. On entering the room of reception shortly before the half hour, Brillat-Savarin found it a scene of agitation and dismay. Some of the guests conversed in whispers or lowly-muttered words. Some were regarding one another curiously and piteously from the corners of their eyes. The countenances of all were expressive of surprise, perplexity, and painful apprehension. “What has happened?” Brillat-Savarin murmured in the ear of an acquaintance. “Alas!” was the answer, “Monseigneur has been sent for to the Council of the State; he has just set out, and who knows when he will return?” The man of law and gastronomic wisdom endeavoured to treat the affair lightly; but the attempt at playfulness was a doleful failure. Dropping into despondency at the close of the first hour, when every

guest had made half a dozen conjectures as to the nature of the urgent business at the Tuilleries, the learned epicure seated himself on the corner of a sofa, and meditated gloomily on sudden reversals of fortune. Before the second hour had passed the victims became morose and querulous. There are conditions under which even Frenchmen, of the best temper and breeding, cannot be cheerful and polite. Those who bore themselves least manfully were three or four seatless wretches. Wandering to and fro, they scowled at one another, and regarded the sitting martyrs with looks of implacable animosity. The tortures of the second hour were repeated and intensified in the third. The aspect of affairs did not brighten when, towards the middle of the fourth hour, a gentleman, returning from a visit of inquiry to the kitchen, remarked viciously, "Monseigneur went out without giving orders, and, however long his absence, dinner will not be served till his return." The announcement was followed by a groan of anguish from the entire company. "Amongst all the martyrs," says the narrator, "the most wretched was the good D'Aigrefeuille, who is known to all Paris; his body was all torture; the agony of Laocoön was in his face. Pale, distracted, seeing nothing, he sat crouched upon an easy-chair, crossed his little hands upon his large belly, and closed his eyes, not to sleep, but to wait the ap-

proach of death." But ere this extreme sufferer lost consciousness, he was revived by a sound of wheels, and an animating assurance that relief was at hand. In another minute Cambacérès appeared —but too late. His friends had lost appetite, nerve, and all disposition for epicurean enjoyment. The stronger of them were restored to their usual vigour by a night's repose, but the weaker and more sensitive were obliged to send for their physicians on the morrow.

CHAPTER XIII.

MANNERS: AND THE WANT OF THEM.

"And though that he was worthy he was wise,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde."

CHAUCER'S "CANTERBURY TALES,"

"Manners make the man, and want of them 'the fellow.'"—OLD PROVERB.

"I cannot much commend the extravagance of the feasting at these readings."—"LIFE OF LORD KEEPER GUILDFORD."

"As drunk as a lord."—CURRENT CALUMNY.

THE English of strictly feudal times were no long sitters over the dinner-table. Having eaten sufficiently, they drank a deep draught of ale, passed the loving-cup, said grace, and went their ways—knightly persons to their sports, lawyers to their courts, traders to their shops, and farmers to their fields. The best of the day was the interval between dinner and supper, and men of pleasure resembled men of business in declining to spend it in drink. Cogan was of opinion that an hour was long enough for anyone's, and far too long for a student's, dinner. The directions given by chamberlains and masters of ceremonies for "voiding the hall," as soon as feasters had washed their hands after the third course, show that it was not the

mode with the old English to sit long over their drink when they had taken enough food at the earlier of the two chief meals.

But in Elizabethan time the wealthy would, on highly festal occasions, remain at table for several hours, to the confusion of their speech, and to the scandal of sober witnesses of their excess. “For the nobilitie, gentlemen, and merchantmen, espe- ciallie at great meetings,” says Harrison, “doo sit commonlie till two or three of the clocke at after- noone, so that with manie it is an hard matter to rise from the table to go to evening prayer, and returne from thence to come time enough for supper.” But such indulgence appeared to the Elizabethan chronicler a discreditable departure from the better manners of olden time.

Clerical dignitaries had an evil fame, at least on the lips of their enemies, for their inordinate devotion to the pleasures of the table. But if not the pure inventions of Protestant malice, the Elizabethan stories of gluttonous prelates and tippling deans, who signalized themselves by intemperance in days prior to the Reformation, were certainly not devoid of humorous exaggeration.

Cogan speaks of an Archbishop of York who sat three entire years at dinner. But on inquiry it appears the primate only enjoyed himself at an unusually solemn banquet, “which,” says Thomas

Wilson in the “Arte of Rhetoric” (1553), “perhaps began at eleven, and continued well-nigh till fower in the afternoone.” Thus, instead of feasting for three years, His Grace did not prolong his sitting beyond the fifth hour. Scarcely had he entered on the first course when there appeared at his gate the Italian ecclesiastic, whose pleasantry gave birth to the malicious story. On learning that the Archbishop was at dinner, the Italian whiled away an hour in looking at the Minster, and then made a second attempt to get admittance to the Primate, when he was again repelled by the porter with a declaration that His Grace, being at dinner, could not receive callers. With no better result, the foreign priest knocked at the archbishop’s gate at two o’clock; and for a fourth time at three o’clock, when “the porter, in a heate, answered never a worde, and churlishlie did shutte the gates upon him.” Whereupon the Italian, whose affairs were urgent, set out at once for London, and returned to Rome without seeing the spiritual chief of the northern province. Three years later, encountering in Rome an Englishman who declared himself right well-known to His Grace of York, the Italian, clothing his face with a merry smile, inquired, drolly, “I pray you, good sir, hath that archbishop dined yet?”

The time which this archbishop actually spent at

the banquet was not inordinate in Grimod de la Reynière's opinion. "Cinq heures à table," says the famous editor of the "Almanach des Gourmands," "sont une latitude raisonnable pour un dîner nombreux et une chère recherchée."

But though the piquant stories of clerical *gourmandise* were based on gross exaggerations, and garnished with pure lies, there is no lack of evidence that the typical dignitaries of Holy Church in Catholic England were not deficient in gastronomic zeal and taste. Cranmer's orders, for the restraint of excess at clerical tables indicate that the festal freedom of the hierarchy sometimes bordered on licentiousness. By those orders, primates were limited to six flesh dishes on flesh days, and to the same number of fish dishes on fish days. Bishops were allowed five dishes, deans and archdeacons four dishes, and beneficed clergy of the inferior grades two dishes. Custards, tarts, fritters, cheese, and apples did not "count" as dishes. They were mere "extras" and fanciful additaments, of which the clerical *gourmet* might eat as many and much as he pleased. In his "Sufferings of the Clergy," Dr. Walker tells how a pious parish-priest was ejected from his cure by the Commonwealth Puritans because he was accused of having "eaten custard scandalously." The Reformers of the sixteenth century knew of no such offence, and permitted

men of all degrees to consult their pleasure in the eating of tarts and sweet-meats. But whilst limiting the numbers of dishes to be placed on clerical tables, they were careful also to prescribe the quantity of good cheer for each dish. Cranmer (*vide Leland's "Collectanea"*) ordered “that of the greater fyshes or fowls, there should be but one in a dyshe, as crane, swan, turkey, haddocke, pyke, tench; and of the less but two, viz., capons two, pheasants two, conies two” (rabbits ranking as poultry at table, as they still do), “and woodcockes two. Of less sortes, as of partridges, the archbishop three, the bishop, and other degrees under hym, two. Of blackbirdes, the archbishop six, the bishop four, the other degrees three. Of larkes and snypes, and of that sort, but twelve.” The object of the restrictions was the good of the poor, for whom the clergy were enjoined to buy “playne meates” with money hitherto spent on superfluous luxuries.

There was more talk after supper than after dinner in feudal time. The *while* during which our pre-Reformation ancestors rested themselves after the earlier, and the mile that they walked after the later meal, were alike short. As twilight deepened in summer, or when the log-fires on winter evenings covered wall and tapestry with flickering flame-shine, our forefathers liked to chat on their homely

interests, or listen to the music of minstrels and ballad-singers. Supper was also a jollier meal than dinner.

But in the nobler circles it was not the mode to be noisily hilarious at either meal. Populace might be riotous at meat, but aristocracy, even over its cups, was sedate, decorous, even frigid, notwithstanding its courteousness. Conversation was no art in high esteem at mediæval tables of the first class. The fun was made by the professional fool during the processes of assay and the shifting of courses. The actual eating was done in silence. Mirthful loquacity being the business of the jester with belled cap—the prattler, who because he could prattle lightly, was pitied and petted, and sometimes whipt for his impudence—gentlemen of quick wit were reluctant to show it lest they too should be mistaken for “fools,” or at least should lose something of their dignity.

Towards the close of the strictly feudal (say of the Tudor) period, English manners in the higher ranks lost much of their ancient formality; but the same stately decorousness distinguished persons of patrician breeding and carriage from the commonalty. “I might here,” says William Harrison of his contemporaries in England, “talke somewhat of the great silence that is used at the tables of the honourable and wiser sort generallie

over all the realme (albeit that too much deserveth no commendation, for it belongeth to guests to be neither muti nor loquaces), likewise the moderate eating and drinking that is dailie seene, and finallie of the regard that each one hath to keepe himselfe from note of surfetting and drunkennesse (for which cause salt meat, except beefe, bacon, and porke are not anie whit esteemed, and yet these three may be much powdered); but as in the rehearsall thereof I should commend the nobleman, merchant, and frugall artificer, so I could not cleare the meaner sort of husbandmen of verie much bobbling (except it be here or there some od yeoman), with whom he is thought to be meriest that talketh of most ribaldrie, or the wisest man that speakest fastest among them, and now and then surfetting and drunkennesse, which they rather fall into for want of heed-taking, than wilfullie following or delighting in those errors of set mind and purpose. It may be that diuers of them living at home with hard and pinching diet, small drinks, and some of them having scarce enough of that, are soonest overtaken when they come unto such banquets, howbeit they take it generallie as no small disgrace if they happen to be cup-shotten, so that it is a grefe unto them, though now *sans remédie* sith the thing is done and past."

At times of high revel, and at particular festivities, such as bridals, the feudal English of the higher classes, however, allowed themselves greater freedom. And in accordance with the temper of a period, whose general dissoluteness was due to other causes besides antagonism to and reaction against Puritanism, our gentry of the Caroline reigns exhibit in their festivities a proneness to riot and "ungodly glee," unknown in former times. In his notice of the extravagant feasting, with which Francis North (Lord Guildford) celebrated his Temple "readings," Roger North gives a notable instance of the riotous ill manners that often distinguished the festive meetings of modish gentlemen in Charles the Second's London. "The profusion of the best provisions and wine," he observes, "was to the worst of purposes, debauchery, disorder, tumult and waste. I will give but one instance: upon the grand day, as it was called, a banquet was provided to be set on the table, composed of pyramids, and smaller services in form. The first pyramid was at least four feet high, with stages one above another. The conveying this up to the table, through a crowd, *that were in full purpose to overturn it*, was no small work; but with the friendly assistance of the gentlemen, it was set on the table. But, after it was looked upon a little, all went hand over head,

among the rout in the hall, and, for the more part, was trod under foot. The entertainment the nobility had out of this was, after they had tossed away the dishes, a view of the crowd in confusion, wallowing one over another, and contending for a dirty share of it." When the "gentlemen" of the Temple behaved in this unseemly manner, the "Inns of Court" were still regarded as *the* university for our aristocratic youth, and the more modish gallants of the four inns prided themselves on being the flower of fashion.

Throughout the remaining years of the seventeenth, and the earlier half of the eighteenth century, English manners continued to deteriorate under the growing taste for heavy wines and ardent spirits. The aristocratic mohocks of Queen Anne's time, like the German baron who amused himself by dancing on his dinner table, were outrageously noisy and clumsily sportive over their cups. The table manners of our earlier Georgian times are proverbial for grossness, and the literature of the period fully justifies their evil reputation. It was not till Chesterfield had made war against the swaggerers, and produced the school of stately "exquisites" who were the forerunners of the Brumwellian "dandies," that good sense combined with good taste to put drunkenness and festal uproar once more out of fashion.

CHAPTER XIV.

SPITS AND JACKS.

“*Pinguia in veribus torrebinus exta columnis.*”

Vide VIRGIL’s “Georgic II. 396.”

“Roost beef and goos, with gurlek, vinegre or pepur in conclusionn.”—*Vide RUSSELL’s “Boke of NURTURE.”*

“He was not pale as a forpined gost,
A fat swan loved he best of any rost.”

Vide CHAUCER’s Monk,—CANTERBURY TALES.

“His arguments in silly circles run,
Still round and round, and end where they begun,
So the poor turnspit, as the wheel runs round,
The more he gains, the more he loses ground.

Vide PITTS’s “ART OF PREACHING.”

Lord Kenyon (to the Clerk of the Rules.) “Sir, tell the House of Commons that I will not be yelped at by my own turnspit.” *Jekyll* (on *Lord Kenyon’s* “always bright spits.”) “Don’t talk about the spits, for nothing turns on them.”—*Vide LORD CAMPBELL’s “LIFE OF LORD KENYON.”*

IN the series of inventions the spit precedes the pot. Madame Dacier overstated the case when she remarked that Homer makes no mention of boiled meat. An instance against her assertion may be found in the Fifth Book of the “Iliad,” which Warner produces as the only notice of boiling in the Homeric poems. The heroes of mythical Greece fed on “roasts” and “broils,” in their general, if not universal, want of pots that would endure fire.

But as soon as such vessels were invented by the Egyptians, they quickly came into common use. Whilst the rich, with slaves to turn their spits, accepted the boiler as a contrivance for multiplying the luxuries of the table, the poor adopted it as an instrument for cooking with the least possible trouble and cost. Boiling saved the waste of the dripping, and the labour of a vigilant “turner” of the roasting meat. Having thrown pieces of meat into the pot, the cook could leave them with a quiet mind till the time came for dishing the savoury pottage. The pot needs no watching. Indeed, there is an old adage which forbids the cook to watch his boiler. “The watched pot never boils.”

In the mediæval kitchen, economy and convenience preferred the pot to the spit. For one dish cooked with the latter, twenty messes came from the former. The recipes of the “Forme of Cury” demonstrate this fact. Populace fed habitually from the pot, and, save on highly festal occasions, never sniffed the smell of “crackling.” Even to modern time “roasts” were regarded as delicacies for the rich rather than as food for the poorer sort of people. Noble and knight, squire and wealthy franklin, thought gratefully of the spit. The husbandman and hind extolled the “pot” as the chief friend of the hungry.

Broiling doubtless preceded roasting; and it is

probable that ere meat was exposed to fire on a spit, the primitive roasters hung their flesh before the flaming fuel by means of string and cross-bar. But the wooden spit played an important part in cookery at an early date, and had been used for centuries when metal spits were regarded as novelties. It has been suggested that the steel spit is a contrivance for which we are indebted to the military profession. In default of a hazel skewer and iron pot, the fasting soldier would be apt to use his sword or spear as a toasting-fork. It may be that the military aptitude for cooking under difficulties led to the discovery which in Time's slow course put out of general request such rude and simple broaches as Virgil mentions in the second Georgic :—

“The altar let the guilty goat approach,
And roast his fat limbs on the hazel broach.”

Centuries have passed since wooden broaches disappeared from the well-furnished kitchen. Referring to them as the exploded contrivances of a remote time, Rabelais says, “Then immediately did Epistemon make, in the name of the nine Muses, nine antique wooden spits.” But to this day they are used on Twelfth Night, in those parts of France where the superstitious peasant delights to work a miracle on the eve of Epiphany by spitting a few larks with a slender and fresh-cut twig, and then placing the loaded broach before a brisk fire. In a

few minutes the heat acts upon the bark and sap-vessels of the twig, so that it turns round without any application of muscular force. Of course, the simple beholders of this marvel exclaim, "A miracle! a miracle!" and attribute to spiritual agency the phenomenon for which they have no scientific explanation.

A simple stake of hard wood, thick at one end and sharpened at the other, the primitive spit, when it had been forced through a mass of flesh, was laid on two wooden crutches that were fixed at a convenient distance from the fire. To facilitate the turner's labour, a mechanical genius in course of time fitted this rudest form of spit with a handle, which was attached to the thick end of the staff by nails or pegs. To broach is to prick, whether the thing operated upon be a horse's flank, a vessel of liquor, a doctrine, an article of clothing, or a piece of news. Knights in olden time broached their steeds with points which perforated the skin. To this day ladies broach their mantles and neck-kerchiefs with pins that are usually fitted with clasps. A spit with the thick end pierced by the pins of a handle, was called a broached or broach-spit, a term that distinguished it from the pointed rod without a handle. The compound word was lost when it had become the universal custom to make spits with handles; and from that time the large roasting

skewer was called “the broach” as often as “the spit.”

The broach-turners of the Old English kitchen were amongst its lowest drudges ; though their toil was fairly remunerated. It was only in great households that they were retained permanently. Inferior establishments found their broach-turners for the preparation of special banquets in their “odd men” and “servile loafers,” who had no title to rank as “regular servants.” The aged pensioner of squire or merchant gladly took his groat and victuals for turning the spit on festal days in his patron’s kitchen. The wandering beggar was always on the look-out for the same employment in the dwellings he approached with shuffling gait and whining voice. Diccou, the vagabond of “Gammer Gurton’s Needle,” says :—

“ Many a mile have I walked, divers and sundry waies,
And many a good man’s house have been at in my days,
Many a gossip’s cup in my time have I tasted,
And many a *broche-spit* have I both turned and basted.
Many a piece of bacon have I had out of their balkes,
In running over the country, with long and wery walkes.”

Fourpence was the sum paid from the chest of St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, Sandwich, A.D. 1569, to the varlet who turned the broach for a feast served in honour of the mayor of the borough. Of course, the fellow had his food as well as his fee.

Not more fond of dogs than clever in training them to service, our Tudor ancestors substituted canine for human turnspits. To effect this they produced the obsolete "roaster," whose spit was set in motion by a wheel worked by a long-backed cur with short crooked legs. Set in a frame, nailed to a convenient beam of the kitchen ceiling, or fixed against an adjacent wall, the dog-wheel was connected by an "endless rope" with the spit that, instead of being fitted with a handle, had a circular piece of wood at one end. When the dog had been placed in the larger wheel of this ingenious apparatus, the spit was soon in action. Lifting his feet in futile attempts to run forwards, and escape from a hot coal laid at his heels on the inner surface of the wheel's circumference, the young animal gave the requisite impulse to the machine. If he grew sluggish as the ember cooled, another piece of burning fuel was taken from the fire, and placed where it would rouse his enthusiasm for monotonous toil. A day at the wheel was enough to teach a fairly intelligent cur that, once on duty, he could only save his heels from the fiery torture by using them actively in the cook's service, and that he could not escape from his rotatory workshop until he had accomplished the task imposed on his reluctant energies. On the second day, if he shrank from the hand which proposed to put him to another spell of

work, the whip taught him the necessity of obedience to law. If he ventured to avoid his social obligations on the third day by hiding, as the roasting hour drew nigh, he was flogged with still greater severity. After a week of this sharp discipline he seldom failed to recognize his place in life. Yielding to the tyranny which he could not resist with advantage, he usually accommodated himself to circumstances with canine common sense, and if a dog of an unusually obsequious temper, he would even feign contentment with a lot and labour which his soul necessarily abhorred.

“How well do I recollect,” wrote Mr. Jesse, “in the days of my youth watching the operations of a turnspit dog at a house of a worthy Welsh clergyman who taught me to read. He was a good man, wore a bushy wig, black worsted stockings, and large plated buckles in his shoes. As he had several boarders as well as day scholars, his two turnspits had plenty to do. They were long-bodied, crook-legged, ugly dogs, with a suspicious unhappy look about them, as if they were weary of the task they had to do, and expected every moment to be seized upon to perform it. Cooks in those days, as they are said to be at present, were very cross; and if the poor animals, wearied with having a larger joint than usual to turn, stopped for a moment, the voice of the cook might be heard rating

them in no gentle manner. When we consider that a large solid piece of beef would take at least three hours before it was properly roasted, we may form some idea of the task a dog had to perform in turning a wheel during that time. A pointer has pleasure in finding game, the terrier worries rats with eagerness and delight, and the bull-dog even attacks bulls with the greatest energy, while the poor turnspit performs his task with compulsion, like a culprit on a tread-wheel, subject to scolding or beating if he stops a moment to rest his weary limbs, and is then kicked about the kitchen when the task is over."

Whilst dogs of suitable smallness worked in the broach-wheels of the Elizabethan kitchens, dogs of greater size and strength—mastiffs, so-called, says Harrison, from their ability to "master thieves"—were made to turn wheels that raised water from wells. At Royston, in Queen Elizabeth's time, water was thus lifted from the spring of a deep well by a dog that worked on a revolving floor, just as a squirrel plays on the wires of a rotatory cage. The ass, whose greater weight made it in the well-wheel a more efficient worker than the heaviest dog, was substituted for this service in the seventeenth century; and to this day a donkey raises water at Carisbrooke Castle, in the Isle of Wight, by vainly

trying to ascend the inner surface of a huge wooden wheel.

Speaking of the four-legged turners of the broach, an Elizabethan physician, Dr. Caius, the founder of Caius College, Cambridge, wrote: “There is comprehended, under the curs of the coarsest kind, a certain dog in kitchen service excellent. For when any meat is to be roasted, they go into a wheel, which they, turning about with the weight of their bodies, so diligently look to their business that no drudge nor scullion can do the feat more cunningly, whom the popular sort hereupon term turn-spits.”

The veriest wretch of all domesticated animals, the canine turnspit had an appearance that accorded with his miserable estate. Deriving from the skill of dog-breeders an unseemly shape, that, whilst fitting him for his peculiar drudgery, made him a by-word amongst “fanciers” for unsurpassable ugliness, he could not regard the reflection of his distorted limbs and graceless body, in shining pewter or brilliant steel, without emotions of self-abhorrence. The cripple and helot of his species, he was scorned by dogs of better looks and higher qualities. The mastiff regarded him as an indolent Carolinian proprietor regards a negro of the lowest type. Whilst my lady’s spaniel and her toy-terrier shrank from him as a terrifying monster, the blood-hound and the deer-hound growled significantly if

he ventured to approach them. No hand ever caressed him. The groom kicked, the scullion rated, the cook flogged him. But he had not the courage to wreak upon his human persecutors the fury of a temper whose natural malignity they aggravated by incessant cruelties. It might be imagined that, in a kitchen provided with two turnspits, he would at least find one congenial and sympathizing friend in the equally despised comrade of his toil and sorrow. But it was not so. Of all living creatures, your true turnspit dog detested none more ferociously and implacably than his fellow turnspit. Abused by men of all degrees, and scorned by every other "dog of the house," a pair of turnspits were continually snarling at and fighting each other. Each accused the other of shirking his fair share of their common work, and devouring more than his fair share of their common rations; and in their mutual rage they would sometimes fight to the death. Buffon tells the story of a turnspit dog that, on escaping from the wheel in the Duc de Lianfort's kitchen in Paris, ran in upon his fellow turnspit and killed him, because the latter had, by skulking, compelled him to perform an additional spell of work. A similar incident occurred at the Jesuit's College of La Flèche, where a turnspit dog, infuriated by being compelled to work in the wheel when it was his turn to be

resting, had no sooner escaped from the cage of torture than he hunted out his dishonest comrade, and, after a brief conflict with him, took his life.

The satirical literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contains several allusions to the turnspits' labour, which, in spite of its importance and beneficence, is invariably treated by the satirists with ingratitude and flippant disdain. The dog, however, is not the only creature that has been compelled to turn a spit. Lemery, the famous French chemist, who flourished in the time of Louis the Fourteenth, once saw a goose turning the broach on which a fat turkey was being roasted. "Alas!" says a gastronomer who moralizes on this incident with appropriate feeling, "we are all turnspits in this world; and when we roast a friend let us be aware that many stand ready to return the compliment." Describing the way in which this turnspit goose performed his task, Dumas says, "Elle tenait l'extrémité de la broche par le bec, et son cou, en s'allongeant et en se rétrécissant, faisait l'effet d'un bras. De temps en temps seulement on avait soin de lui donner à boire." The story is produced by the novelist to prove that geese are susceptible of education.

Comical stories could be told of misadventures following from the untimely disappearance of turnspit curs. Many an epicure's kitchen has been

thrown into confusion by the sudden retirement of the broach-dog. Still worse; all the inhabitants of populous cities have been deprived of their “roasts,” and reduced to pot-luck by the unexpected loss of many hundred curs, simultaneously and maliciously lured away from their proper kitchens. At the close of the last century the captain of a man-of-war stationed off Bristol, in his resentment at the city’s incivility, sent his blue-jackets on shore with orders to seize and carry on board every turnspit dog to be found in the western metropolis. The sailors executed their instructions so completely, that the Bristolians were without roast meat until they came to terms with the heroic dog-stealer, and had solemnly promised to entertain him with a banquet appropriate to a sailor of his rank and special achievements. A similar trouble befell the fashionable folk of Bath some years later, when the chairmen of the streets, obeying certain practical jokers in the ranks of the highest quality, seized all the turnspits of the town on Saturday night, and kept them in concealment till Monday morning. Bath was without “hot roast” all Sunday, the day on which the smell and flavour of “hot roast” are especially agreeable to church-going Englishmen. By-the-way, the turnspit curs of Bath were notable for piety. When their professional avocations permitted them to do so, they never failed to accom-

pany their mistresses to the services of the abbey. And it is on record that they were examples of grave demeanour at the religious celebrations, unless the First Chapter of Ezekiel, with its reiterations of wheels within wheels, was one of the appointed lessons for the day. Verse 15 of that agonising chapter made the dogs restless ; verse 16 caused them to yelp and bark angrily ; the reader's voice was lost in the lamentable howlings and whinings that expressed the canine disapproval of verses 19 and 20. In their terror and anguish, the cruelly-entreated animals, raising as they ran a dismal concert of doleful sounds, rushed in a body from the abbey as the reader continued, “ When those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them : for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.”

In Charles the Second's time, a curious mechanician contrived a machine for roasting meat that was set in action by clock-work. Speaking of this invention in the “ Life of Lord Keeper Guildford,” Roger North says, “ And once, upon an invitation, his lordship dined with Sir Samuel Moreland at his house ; and, though his entertainment was exquisite, the greatest pleasure was to observe his devices ; for everything showed art and mechanism. . . . His coach was most particular ; and he made a portable engine that moved by watch-work, which

might be called a kitchen ; for it had a fireplace and grate, with which he could make a soup, broil costelette, or roast an egg ; and for that, his contrivance was by a fork with five tines (as I may call it), which stood upright at a due distance before the firegrate, and turned slowly. An egg, put into that, would roast according to art, and, if a piece of meat were stuck upon it, it was dressed by clock-work. He said that this machine cost him £30. He took it with him in his coach, and, at the inns, he was his own cook."

Cleverer in contriving new instruments than in ruling womanhood, the inventor of this cooking apparatus was the same Sir Samuel Moreland whose wife amused London with her misdemeanours, whilst he entertained it with ingenious proposals. Pepys's diary and correspondence contain several allusions to peccadilloes of the lady, who was eventually separated from her husband by judicial decree. Moreland corresponded with the Secretary for the Admiralty on his project for a new gun-carriage. An experimental agriculturist, Sir Samuel, lost his money in farming ; and he is one of the several mechanicians of the seventeenth century who, on insufficient evidence, have been credited with the invention of the steam-engine.

Another notable invention for roasting meat was the musical turnspit, that, whilst causing joints to

gyrate before the Count de Castel Maria's kitchen-fire, played four-and-twenty tunes to the cooks of that opulent lord of Treviso. The spits of this machine turned a hundred and thirty roasts at the same time ; and the chef was informed, by the progress of the melodies, when the moment had arrived for removing each piece of meat. Chickens were done to a turn when the organ had played its twelfth tune ; the completion of the eighteenth air was the signal for withdrawing hares and pheasants ; but the largest pieces of beef and venison were not ready for the board until the twenty-fourth melody had been played out. Of course this delightful machine for charming the ear and gratifying the stomach could be set in motion by the dog, the human turnspit, or the revolving fans of the smoke-jack. A barrel-organ provided with roasting-spits is a mechanical combination that would delight our cook-maids, who are the steadiest and most munificent supporters of the vagrant organ-grinders of our London streets.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century the wheel and dog were replaced in many kitchens by the smoke-jack, an arrangement of rotating fans that, sent round by the draught of air and smoke ascending the chimney, accomplished the work hitherto performed by a miserable cur. At the opening of the present century, the village black-

smith made considerable yearly earnings as a maker and repairer of smoke-jacks ; and whilst attending to this department of his business, the intelligent artisan could not fail to observe that a chimney's draught was quickened by the rising smoke, and that it also increased in proportion to the largeness and fierceness of the fire. These obvious facts bear in an interesting way on the application of the "blast" to the locomotive. Makers and repairers of smoke-jacks, like all the other handy smiths of their district, the Northumbrian engine-wrights, who built our earliest working locomotives, were sagacious observers of all circumstances affecting the draught of house-chimneys. It devolved on them to cure chimneys of smoking, and to increase the burning power of stoves by quickening the chimney draught. Under these circumstances, it is not wonderful that at an early date in the history of the locomotive they saw that its waste steam might be used to quicken the draught of its chimney, and that the value of this instrument for keeping up a good fire would increase in proportion to their ability to make a larger amount of steam.

The dog-wheel having been superseded by the smoke-jack, the latter was in its turn discredited by the jack, called a bottle-jack, from its resemblance to a large bottle. The motive power of

this instrument is the weight of the suspended meat, which it causes to revolve before the fire. Thus the work of turning the spit, in the course of centuries, passed from men to dogs, from dogs to atmospheric force, from sportive air to dead weight. Having first imposed the labour on his meanest curs, man next constrained the buoyant breeze to play the part of kitchen drudge. His next innovation was to substitute the hook-spit for the spear-spit, and by an ingenious piece of clock-work extort from “gravity” the service formerly rendered by the wanton atmosphere or by muscular force. He must be an old man who can remember seeing a turnspit-dog working in its wheel. But the smoke-jack is not yet altogether a thing of the past. Gloucestershire contains at least one great county-house, the bright spits of whose conservative kitchen are to this day turned by the fans of an old fashioned smoke-jack revolving in a huge old-fashioned chimney.

Apropos of “jacks,” be it observed that the human drudge, who in feudal times turned a lord’s meat-broach, was always called “Jack” by his contemptuous fellow-servants, who, by thus giving him a name universally despised by the people of Chaucer’s England, expressed their disdain of his lowly office. Together with his labour, his name passed to the despised cur, the active air,

and the modern bottle. A jack-towel is another piece of kitchen furniture to be noticed in connection with the ancient turn-spit's special name. Antiquaries have erred in supposing that the endless towel, running on a roller, was called a jack or "jerk" towel because the user in selecting a dry place of the cloth "jerks" it round. The long, endless napkin running on a roller was called a jack-towel from its resemblance to the endless band or cord that connected the dog-wheel and spit.

Suspended from the crooked spit of a bottle-jack, and changing colour before a clear fire, a sirloin of beef may be fairly called its own turnspit. Human ingenuity achieved one of its proudest triumphs when it thus compelled a mass of unconscious flesh to prepare itself for the table. The epicures of old time never imagined that dead flesh would be thus made its own cook. All they could accomplish in this department of the marvellous was to signalize their barbarity by roasting live geese in a way that dispensed with the services of the turnspit.

CHAPTER XV.

CRUELTIES AND CURIOSITIES.

"A little before our times, a goose was wont to be brought to the table of the King of Arragon, that was roasted alive, as I have heard by old men of credit."—*Vide BAPTISTA PORTA's "NATURAL MAGICK."*

"At last I discovered, with some joy, a pig at the lower end of the table, and begged a gentleman that was near to cut me a picce of it. Upon which the gentleman of the house said with real civility, 'I am sure you will like the pig, for it was whipt to death.'" —*Vide ADDISON's No. 148, "THE TATLER."*

"So ox-flesh may grow tender, especially of old oxen, for they are hard and dry, and will not easily boil."—*Vide "NATURAL MAGICK."*

THE Neapolitans of the sixteenth century were instructed by John Baptista Porta how pleasant and droll a thing it was to pluck a living goose, anoint her with suet, put her on the floor of a closet walled in with a circular fireplace, roast her almost to death, and finally eat her palpitating flesh. Having received minute instructions for compassing this diabolical repast from the learned author of "Natural Magick," the finest gentlemen and daintiest ladies of Naples carried them out with conscientious exactitude in their kitchens and at their super-fashionable tables.

Speaking on the authority of "old men of credit,"

Baptista Porta relates that the “King of Arragon” delighted in no dish so much as in a goose that had cooked itself before expiring on his plate and under his royal observation. There was no “morbid tenderness” for the lower animals in Baptista’s time. On the contrary, it was urged by the moralists of the period that for man to compassionate the sufferings of the unreasoning brutes was to question the benevolence of the Providence who had made pain a condition of their existence. As for Baptista’s feelings, it is enough to say that, on eating his first fowl cooked in this Arragonese manner, he was sincerely sorry that it had not been roasted a little more. It was alive and excellent on the outside ; but, alas ! the process had suffered from the cook’s precipitancy.

Recovering himself, the learned gentleman, whose poor Latin was superior to his humanity, observes :—“The rule to do it is thus : Take a duck, or a goose, or some such lusty creature, but the goose is best for the purpose ; pull all the feathers from his body, leaving his head and his neck ; then make a fire round about him, not too narrow, lest the smoke choke, or the fire roast him too soon . not too wide, lest he escape unroasted. Within side set everywhere little pots of water, and put salt and honey to them. Let the goose be smeered all over with suet, and well larded, that he may be the better

meat, and rost the better; put fire about, but make not too much haste; when he begins to rost he will walk about, and cannot get forth, for the fire stops him; when he is weary, he quencheth his thirst by drinking the water, by cooling his heart and the rest of his internal parts. . . . Continually moisten his head and heart with a sponge. But when you see him run mad up and down, and to stumble, his heart then wants moysture, wherefore take him away, and set him on the table to your guests.” “Ubi vero,” says the noble philosopher, whose Latin is inadequately rendered by his English translator, “insania ferri, et cespitare conspexeris (deficit cordi humidum) remove, convivis appone evulsis semper partibus vociferantem, ut fere prius commessatus quam mortuus videatur.”

This revolting receipt for cooking a goose may also be found in John Wecker’s “Eighteen Books of the Secrets of Art and Nature,” the impudent and clumsy reproduction of Porta’s “Natural Magick,” which Dr. Read put into English and published in the year of Charles the Second’s restoration. From Read’s translation of Wecker’s piratical performance, it passed to Dr. Kitchiner’s “Cook’s Oracle,” and other works on the curiosities of gastronomy.

If there ever was a time when our ancestors could have relished such a diabolical preparation, it had

passed long before the English physician produced his rendering of Wecker's "Art and Nature." There is no evidence that the King of Arragon's favourite dish was ever set on an English table. Not that our ancestors, in their pursuit of gastronomic pleasure, were incapable of practices repugnant to the finer feeling of the present generation. It was their custom to kill animals by slow and terrifying processes, in order that their flesh should be made tender by muscular agony and mental distress. The flesh of the hunted hare is said to be more tender than the flesh of a shot hare; and it is probable that the struggles of a creature slowly killed by torture soften its muscles. Anyhow, our forefathers were assured that flesh was tender in proportion to the amount of pain and terror employed in slaying it. Game struck by the terrifying falcon was more toothsome than game killed in a quicker and less alarming manner. Hence it was usual with the Old English to fly a hawk at barn-door poultry and "crammed birds." At other times, the feudal housekeeper would throw turkeys and peacocks into the air from the top of a gate-tower or church-steeple, in order that the fowls, as they dropped to the ground below, "with great pains and shaking of their wings," might endure terror which could not fail to intenerate their flesh. Or, with the same object in view, he would hang

live geese or turkeys by their bills or necks to the bow of a saddle, and order a servant to mount horse, and take them for a gallop across country. “And these,” says the narrator, “being thus rackt and tossed with great pains, at the journey’s end you shall find dead and very tender.”

In like manner bulls were baited with dogs, not so much for the barbarous pleasure of witnessing brutal conflicts as for the inteneration of the beef, which would have been less eatable had the animals been killed quickly with knife and bludgeon. “The butchers,” says Baptista Porta, “put hounds at them, and let them prey upon them, and they will for some hours defend themselves with their horns ; at last, being overcome by multitudes of dogs, they fall with their ears torn, and bit in their skin ; these, brought into the shambles, and cut out, are more tender than ordinary.” To bait an ox with dogs was to soften its flesh for the teeth of old men and children ; but to bait the animal with bears was to make the meat so tender and soluble that it would melt in a babe’s mouth. The apologist for the brutalizing amusements of our ancestors will see his advantage in this account of the origin and prime purpose of bull-baiting. To show that the barbarity had a commendable object is at least to palliate its worst features, and also to account for the social toleration of its exhibitions. So long as

schoolboys were allowed to subscribe their pence to defray the cost of bull-baitings, teachers of the young in their recognition of the *usefulness* overlooked the *cruelty* of the sport. To the gentle-women of George the Second's London, who daily watched from their drawing-room windows the bull-baitings of Lincoln's Inn Fields, the pastime was little else than a process for supplying the market with meat of the finest quality. Had they known that the proper inteneration of meat could have been compassed by means less inconvenient and harassing to the baited animal, these fair watchers of the bull-ring would have raised their voices for the suppression of a sport that was decidedly diverting and pleasant—to the spectators. But since Providence and human wisdom had ordained that beef should be thus prepared for the table, who were they that they should presume to question the merits of the arrangement? What was the transient discomfort of a brute in comparison with the pleasure of civilized men, and all the good that ensues from delicate feeding? It was not to be supposed that, having authorized man to kill and devour the inferior creatures, the great Giver of "good cheer" forbade him to use every means for rendering them in the highest degree palatable and digestible.

While bull-baiting was still sanctioned in England as a wholesome culinary process, our ancestors in-

tenerated pigs by whipping them to death, a treatment that produced the requisite bodily convulsions and mental distress in the dying animal. Addison tells us that in his time the fastidious epicure would commend a sucking pig, or a piece of older pork, to his friends with the assurance that the creature had died under the lash. But though ordinary folk saw nothing objectionable in this culinary practice, moralists debated whether man was justified in using it for the gratification of his palate. With a seriousness that, taking the statement from the domain of humour, gives it historic dignity, Charles Lamb observes, in his "Dissertation on Roast Pig," "I remember an hypothesis argued upon by the young students when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, 'Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?' I forget the decision."

Uninfluenced by the votes of the Catholic students, the humourist differed in no degree from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals with respect to the barbarity of the process. "Yet," he added, "we should be cautious, while we con-

demn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto."

At present, none but a rashly-daring man would venture to defend our ancestors' flagellatory treatment of the young pig, whose flesh was by nature sufficiently soft and soluble. But in judging their equally repulsive treatment of the ox, we should remember the toughness and hardness of the animals that they worried into tenderness. The beef of "Old England" lacked the juicy richness and delicacy of the modern sirloin. Operating on creatures that bore little resemblance to the high-bred, stall-fed brutes of the Smithfield Cattle Show, the butchers of olden England would have lost their customers had they refused to worry their oxen with bull-dogs.

The same apology cannot be made for cruelties still perpetrated by dealers in meat. When we are virtuously indignant with the bull-baiters of former time, who were cruel for the sake of texture, we should reserve some of our wrath for the wretches who, to this day, are far more cruel for the sake of colour. To produce a veal of excellent whiteness, it is still the brutal custom of butchers in some parts of England to kill young calves by flogging them.

Even Monsieur Louis Eustache Ude would have conceded that the attainment of a superior colour

in a viand was no sufficient object to justify the infliction of extreme torture on a helpless animal. According to this Frenchman any cruelty was permissible, and even commendable, in cookery that was conducive to health or the palate's gratification. But he went no further. In his receipt for a "matelotte of eels" he says lightly and concisely, "Take one or two live eels. Throw them into the fire. As they are twisting about on all sides, lay hold of them with a towel in your hand, and skin them from head to tail. This method is best, as it is the means of drawing out the oil, which is unpalatable." Assailed by an Edinburgh Reviewer and other critics for the apparent cruelty of this precept, Ude defended himself in the seventh edition of the "French Cook" by remarking, in a note, "Several gentlemen have accused me of cruelty for recommending in my work that eels should be burnt alive. As my knowledge of cookery is entirely devoted to the gratification of their taste, and the preservation of their health, I consider it my duty to attend to what is essential to both. The blue skin and the oil, which remain when they are skinned, are highly indigestible. If any gentleman or lady should make the trial of both, they will find that the burnt ones are much healthier; but it is, after all, left to their choice whether to burn or skin." It is clear on which side Monsieur

Ude would have spoken and voted had he taken part in the discussion on the propriety of whipping pigs to death. By the way Monsieur Ude, in his youth, was designed for the Church, and had received the first elements of a clerical education.

But enough for the present of processes that are no less revolting than singular. To relieve him of disgust occasioned by recent recitals, let the next few pages entertain the reader with dishes that are curious without, at the same time, being cruel.

When he told his readers how Archestratus, the Syracusan, used to cook a pig so that it was roasted on the one half and boiled on the other, Isaac Disraeli was not aware that an earlier writer had given even more precise directions for the same culinary achievement. In the ninth book of the "Deipnosophistæ," Athenæus describes how a hog may be served, with one half well roasted and the other delicately boiled. Dishes of this kind were in high favour with the ancient epicures, and the taste for them was transmitted by the gourmands of the Roman Empire to the mediæval gastronomers. They were, also, occasionally seen on the tables of our ancestors in Charles the Second's time.

Together with Athenæus's receipt for thus trifling with the sublime grandeur of a boar, Baptista Porta, in the "Natural Magick," gives directions for cooking poultry and fish in the same fantastic

manner. He instructed the chefs of the sixteenth century how to fry, boil, and roast a lamprey all at once, and how to surprise a novice in gastronomy with a capon, one half roasted, and the other half boiled. To accomplish this last-named exploit, the cook had only to lay a properly-dressed capon on its side in a rather deep dish, add broth till the liquor rose over the lower half of the fowl, and then put the vessel into the oven. "The upper part of the capon," says the author, "will be roasted by the heat of the oven, and the under part will be boiled. Nor will it be less pleasant to behold."

When he had feasted to excess on birds and beasts cooked thus curiously, the gourmand of Charles the Second's time was in a condition to derive benefit from the stomach-brush or "pro-vang," which Judge Rumsey of Gray's Inn contrived, during the Commonwealth, for the seasonable relief of gentlemen who had overeaten themselves. Mentioned in the "Book about Doctors," this elegant invention is also described in a number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1750, where the inquirer may, moreover, find a picture of the apparatus. But no student who would fully understand the inventor's "instrument to cleanse the stomach," and ascertain the conditions most favourable for its efficacious use, should fail to peruse the "Organon Salutis" (1657), wherein the Judge

commends his harmless and convenient brush as a substitute for the perilous emetics of the apothecary. It is, he observes, “a whalebone instrument, which may be made from two foot in length or more to a yard long, after this form, to be used for all ages, according to the stature of their bodies. It may be made after the form of a long feather out of a goose-wing, with a small button of fine linen or silk, to the bignesse of a cherrystone, fastened at one end, which goeth into the body, and with a string fastened at the other end, that a man may use and draw it out at pleasure. These are commonly sold in London, and especially at the long shops in Westminster Hall. If it be kept in water, it will be as gentle as may be desired. It must be stirred gently, and always used after some meat and drink, as any man liketh best, and findeth occasion for it.”

For fear of shocking the polite reader, the present writer forbears to recite Judge Rumsey’s minuter directions for the use of the brush, which, strange to say, proved less agreeable to epicures than the contriver hoped it would be. “Sir, I have tried your sherry, and I prefer the gout,” the last Lord Derby replied to the puffing wine-merchant, who had sent him a sample of “pure unbrandied sherry,” of which it was asserted the Earl might drink two bottles a-day without provoking an attack of his

podagra. The epicures took the same view of Judge Rumsey's "first remedy: the provang." Having tried it, and even praised it into transient fashion, they preferred dyspepsia, tempered by old-fashioned emetics, notwithstanding the obvious disadvantages of the ancient medicines. "My dear doctor," an Irish gentleman observed to Dr. Babington, "it is of no use your giving me an emetic. I tried it twice in Dublin, and it would not stay on my stomach either time."

The men who made trial of Judge Rumsey's stomach-brush belonged to a generation of daring and self-sacrificing experimentalists. Some of them would "swallow small white pebble stones, to cool the heat of their stomachs, which," adds the witnessing inventor of the provang, "I conceive to be in imitation of long-winged hawks." Others of them cooled their coppers with leaden bullets. "I have known others," says Judge Rumsey, "that used to swallow small bullets of lead, which giveth me occasion to report a strange history which I know to be true. An old souldier and commander in Queen Elizabeth's time, in the Low Countries, was drinking of healths among his companions, and at every health did drink a pistol bullet to the number of eighteen, which continued in his belly for neer the space of two years. He acquainted a physition with his case, who did hang the souldier

by the heels, by a beam in a chamber, and then all the bullets dropped out of his mouth again ; but the same were somewhat worn in his belly. The souldier is yet living, and, in good health, and about fore-score and ten years of age."

The Younger Brunel (Isambart Kingdom) was amusing his children with conjuring tricks, when he slipped into his mouth a half-sovereign, that, entering his gullet, lodged there for a few days. To relieve the engineer of his sufferings, his physicians caused him to be raised from his sofa, feet upwards and head downwards, when the coin dropped through the patient's mouth to the floor. Mr. Brunel's mis-adventure has been thought a singular case. But it is a trivial affair in comparison with the case of Judge Rumsey's soldier. Sceptics will probably reject the lawyer's story as a fiction. The reader may be left to decide between the judge and his censors.

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CHAPTER XVI.

NUMBERS AT TABLE.

“Terna tibi hæc primum triplici diversa colore
Licia circumdo, terque hæc altaria circùm
Effigiem duco, Numero Deus impare gaudet.”

Vide VIRGIL, ECL. VIII.

“Crowd not your table, let your number be
Not more than seven, and never less than three.”

DR. KING'S “ART OF COOKERY.”

“The more the merrier, the fewer the better cheer,—Two are company, three are none.”—OLD PROVERBS,

“Que le nombre des convives n'excéde pas douze, afin que la conversation puisse être constamment générale.”—BRILLAT-SAVARIN'S “PHYSIOLOGIE DU GOUT.”

“En France tous les nombres sont bons, hors le nombre treize.”
—ALEXANDRE DUMAS' “DICTIONNAIRE DE CUISINE.”

THOUGH epicures differ as to the best number of guests for an agreeable dinner, they are unanimous in holding that no party, with enjoyment for its sole object, should be too numerous for general conversation. Like the best authorities of ancient Rome, on matters pertaining to the table, some of the most eminent Amphitryons of modern England have insisted that dinner should never be served for less than three persons, the number of

by the heels ^s, or for more than nine, the number of the bullet ^{-ses}. Dr. King, Swift's friend, and the author same ^w "The Art of Cookery," thought nine too many is ^v two for perfect enjoyment. In his opinion, the ^{sc} feasters at a banquet should never be so few as two or exceed the number of the days in a week. Grimod de la Reynière's favourite number was three, but he allowed it to be raised to six, which no dinner party ought, in his opinion, to exceed under any circumstances. "Les dîners fins se font en petites comités. Et comme une fricassée de poulets ne sauroit être parfaite si l'on met plus de trois, de même un repas de foncés amateurs ne doit excéder six couverts."

Twelve has, however, been declared a permissible number by the finest gourmands of modern France and modern England. Brillat-Savarin and Alexandre Dumas insist that, though less desirable than a smaller party, a dinner of twelve may be altogether successful.

The largeness of the number does not preclude general conversation, when each member of the assembly is careful to address the company rather than his next neighbour, and talks for the general enjoyment rather than his own pleasure. But though it is possible for a speaker to make himself heard over a table of twelve without raising his voice to the pitch of declamation, or to

any offensive loudness, an animated talker is apt to become too noisy and oratorical at so large a meeting. The conversational competition of twelve persons too often begets the clamorous contention that puts an end to sociable gossip, and is more prejudicial than any other disturbing influence to gastronomic enjoyment. With due respect to the many eminent feeders who have spoken of the number with approval or toleration, it may be questioned whether so many as a dozen persons should ever be invited to the dinner, which is designed for something better than formal and ceremonious hospitality.

Two will always remain with high epicures the best of all *social* numbers for an artistic regalement. More secure from disturbing incidents than any higher number, it is especially favourable to gastronomic sympathy and the poetry of feeding. Especially conducive to mutual confidence and the enthusiasm of friendship, the *tête-à-tête* dinner is distinguished by an almost sacred repose. Lord Barrymore and his Jacobite physician, Dr. Beauford, had no need to talk of their devotion to the Pretender, when they exchanged looks of ecstasy and unalterable affection over their choicest dishes.

“ You know Lord Barrymore ? ” Dr. Beauford was asked during his examination by the Lords of the Privy Council.

"Intimately, most intimately," replied the Doctor.

"You are continually with him?" urged the questioner.

"We dine together," was the answer, "almost daily when his lordship is in town."

"What do you talk about?"

"Eating and drinking."

"And what else?"

"Oh, my lord, we never talk of anything except eating and drinking, drinking and eating."

Of what else should two wise and delicate feasters speak at a *tête-à-tête* meal? To them the subject comprehends the whole domain of the higher interests. Together with the generous emotions, it covers politics, philosophy and art. Moreover, for such fervid politicians as our lord and his doctor, two is an agreeably *safe* number at table, should the talk run into politics and treason. The law of England declares three persons, at least, to be requisite for a conspiracy. And even moralists have held that a man may defend himself against a treacherous comrade, by repudiating as false the traitor's true report of words interchanged "under the rose" of social confidence.

Perfect harmony is endangered by the introduction of a third person. In compliment to the Graces, the Fates, and possibly the Furies, the

ancients were frequent givers of dinners for three. When Lucullus, Cicero, and Pompey dined together in the Chamber of Apollo, at a cost of seventy-five thousand sesterces, they had a perfect menu; but the felicity of the meeting scarcely equalled that of Lucullus's dinners with himself, or Lord Barrymore's *tête-à-tête* "feeds" with his congenial doctor. The traitor at a *tête-à-tête* repast may be defeated with permissible perjury; but disastrous truth may be established out of the mouths of two witnesses who, on leaving a dinner of three, combine to hand their common associate over to his political adversaries. When he has decided to ask a third, Amphitryon had better invite a fourth guest. Harmony is exposed to less peril by the fourth than by the third. If the third possesses any unamiable propensity, it may be corrected by a contrary disposition in the fourth. Moreover, with four at table, dinner may be followed by whist, a game beloved by gastronomers beyond all other games.

For a festal meeting of philosophers, five is the fittest of all numbers. Unproductive in addition—(five + five equals ten, *i.e.*, equals only one cypher)—the number, which symbolizes virginity, is sacred to Minerva, whose festival, the Quinquatrus, began on the *fifth* day after the Ides of March, and in the time of Ovid lasted for *five* days. Cognizant of these facts,

the Fellows of our Royal Society should relinquish the periodical dinners of their entire brotherhood, and blush to dine together in any number exceeding Minerva's symbol. In further commendation of five as the number for a dinner of *savants*, it should be observed that it is admirable for the purposes of scientific discussion. Whilst five learned minds are enough for the ventilation of nice questions of science, a party of that number is less likely than a larger assembly to be guilty of such exhibitions of animosity as sometimes disturb the serenity of philosophers in debate. Moreover, it is well for learned men to assemble in an uneven number, so that the functions of moderator may be discharged by an "odd man," who, voting only when the disputants on both sides of an argument are equal, may determine even controversies by a dispassionate casting vote.

But whether they are philosophers of many "ologies," or epicures whose one philosophy has reference to the enjoyments of the table, six (Grimod de la Reynière's number) is better than five for a party consisting of representatives of both sexes. When the sexes meet at the social board they should be equally matched—at least, in number. They should also be arranged so that their alternation is complete. The man is never altogether content at a dinner-table who, with a

lady next him on one side, has a man for his other neighbour. It is even worse when two of the gentler sex are seated together. Like a swimmer with one arm tied, and therefore powerless to use the other effectively, the woman who is denied the stimulus of a flirtation on her left hand can seldom flirt brilliantly and consistently with her partner on the right. For this reason, eight and twelve are inconvenient numbers for a party of both sexes at an oblong table, with the hostess at the top and the host at the bottom, after the old fashion.

Seven, the mystic number with which the ancient Egyptians divided time into weeks, has several claims to consideration as the proper force of celebrants for a festal exercise. Whilst the dinner, a noble work, reminds one of the greatest of all creative achievements, it may be well that the number of the guests should equal the six days of productive labour and the one day of rest. With Dr. King, as we have already seen, *seven* was a maximum number for a banquet of wits. And certainly the number is quite enough for an assembly of "wits," all overflowing with raillery, and more ready to talk than to listen. Bedlam on visiting-day, at the full of the moon (as it was in the old time when the moon still affected the phrenzies of lunatics), would be less deafening than a meeting of twelve such table-talkers as Sydney Smith. The thunder-storm of

such a meeting would burst and spend itself without any “brilliant flashes of silence.”

Far better than seven, for a meeting of both sexes, and not too many for a small dining-room, eight is not a number to be shut out of respectful consideration by a pedantic reiteration of Dr. King’s precept. It is much in its favour that it is the favourite number of one of our most enlightened epicures, a man scarcely less honourably known in literature and the arts than in the profession of which he is a brilliant leader. After much consideration and experience in hospitable labours, this consummate entertainer insists that, whilst eight is neither too many nor too few for the requirements of social intercourse, it had several economical recommendations. A dinner for eight is so easily managed in the kitchen that the chef can give the proper amount of personal attention to each item of the menu, and is not compelled to expend his powers on the chief works of the menu to the prejudice of subordinate, though important, dishes. Moreover, a bottle of wine, distributed by a judicious butler, gives eight glasses, a fact that of itself commends the number to the Amphitryon whose wines are curious and costly, and who never sends the same wine twice round his table. Anyhow, the “octaves” of this entertainer are so successful and

famous that they have given the dinner of eight a new place in epicurean annals.

Besides commemorating the Muses, nine possesses in an especial degree the luck which folk-lore has for centuries assigned to odd numbers. "I'll hold," says Falstaff in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," "this is the third time: I hope, good luck lies in odd numbers. Away, go; they say, there is a divinity in odd numbers, either in nativity, chance, or death." If three was lucky, much more so was three times three. The decalogue is honoured by the feast for ten persons. Eleven, an odd number, covers the ten commandments and the precept of mutual love. Mention has been made of twelve. A questionable number, it is too good to be rejected, and not good enough to be accepted, without a murmur. Just not too many for sociability under favourable conditions, twelve are barely enough for pomp and ceremonious grandeur. When it comprises four persons ambitious of leading the conversation, the party of twelve is often unmanageable; and when found too large for general gossip, it is also found too small for subdivisions into knots and coteries. Still, in spite of its disadvantages, it ranks among the sociable numbers.

To speak of the difficulty of placing guests, is to think of the different shapes of the table. For the grand dinner of two dozen or thirty guests, no

board is better than the oblong table. Larger banquets require the horse-shoe board, or one of the several combinations of long tables—the L, the H, or the Pi table. For smaller parties the circular table is excellent. But it is inconvenient for a company exceeding twelve; the circle, whose circumference affords ample space for eighteen guests, being so large that each sitter is at a most unsocial distance from his diametrically opposed fellow-guest, whilst the middle of the board, lying beyond reach of hands, is so much useless area. King Arthur's round table was a mythical impossibility. The oval table has all the advantages, while avoiding the disadvantages, of the circular board. The full-sized square table is best for a party of eight. By the way, “square meals” is an American colloquialism for meals taken at table, in contradistinction to “snacks” taken from a buffet. The rectangular table should always be so large that two persons may sit in line at the top and two side by side at the bottom; and, for reasons already indicated, at a party of eight or twelve persons, taken in equal numbers from both sexes, either end of the table should be occupied by a gentlewoman and her cavalier. The Amphitryon whose dining-room is too narrow for such table, or whose rectangular table is too narrow to admit of such an arrangement, should compass a perfect alternation of the sexes by

putting a man at either end of the board. It is no longer a point of dignity with a lady to sit at the upper end of her own table.

A word on the woods of which dining-tables may be made. Rose-wood, walnut, maple—indeed, any wood that takes a good polish, and by its colour pleases the eye,—may be used for other furniture; but in England oak and mahogany are *the* woods for the festal table. “The old tree” of the olden English was invariably an oak; but in later times it has been generally supplanted by the mahogany, which came into vogue in the days of Anne and her nearest successor. Dr. Gibbons, the physician whom Dr. Radcliffe detested, and nick-named “Nurse Gibbons,” may be thanked for the warm-coloured wood with which we have so many agreeable associations. His brother, a West Indian captain, brought over some of the wood as ballast, thinking it might possibly turn to account in the London. At first the carpenters, in a truly conservative spirit, refused to have anything to do with the “new wood,” saying it was too hard for their tools. Dr. Gibbons, however, had first a candle-box, and then a bureau made for Mrs. Gibbons out of the condemned material. The bureau so pleased his friends, amongst whom was the Duchess of Buckingham, that Her Grace ordered a similar piece of furniture, and introduced the wood into

high life, where it quickly became the fashion. Ere long the wood of the warm hue and brilliant “polish” was seen in every dining-room of good society; and in order that they might see their glass and plate reflected on the lustrous surface of their mahogany, epicures ordered the cloth to be removed before the after-service or dessert. Thus the new wood, having put conservative oak into disfavour, introduced a new table-fashion.

Much may be said in behalf of solitary dinners. If two is the number of social confidence and security, one is the number of *unsocial* safety. In troublous times the wretch who can trust no one does well to dine alone. The secrets which a man confides to himself at a lonely regalement are in his own keeping, and it is only by his own act that they can be brought in evidence against him. Even more than two, one is a number favourable to harmony. The man who can agree with no one else may at least be able to think well of himself. He can approve his own arguments when there is none to oppose them, and applaud the *jeux d'esprit* of which he is the creator and sole recipient. Two has been declared company, when three may be no such thing; but to certain natures two at a table is one too many, whilst one at a feast is the perfection of companionship. “There is society where noise intrudes,” and epicures have declared that this society is best

cultivated at a sybaritic board. Of course the man may be found who, shunning all men, thinks meanly of himself. But the anchorite who, in his solitude, quarrels with himself is a prodigy of captiousness and self-hatred that defies consideration. Ceasing to dine, he should starve himself out of existence as soon as possible.

Lucullus never dined more sumptuously than when he dined alone. All readers remember how he upbraided his chef for serving him a cheap repast (costing about £100 of English money) when "Lucullus dined with Lucullus," and no one else. Equally great as a consumer and a composer, Haydn liked to dine alone and eat much. It was his custom to order dinner for five at his favourite hotel, and at the appointed hour to devour the whole banquet. "Serve dinner," he said on one occasion to a new waiter, who was not aware of the musician's way of sustaining himself. "The dinner is ready," returned the waiter, bowing respectfully to the hotel's best customer, "but, Sir, the company is not come." "De gompany!" Haydn retorted contemptuously. "Pooh! de gompany! I am de gompany." The dinner for five was forthwith put before "de gompany," and not an eatable scrap of it found its way back to the kitchen. Haydn's ducal contemporary of Norfolk was another lordly feeder, who delighted to eat at a Covent Garden

tavern food enough for five ordinary feasters. But the duke, more sensitive of observation than the musician, never again dined five times at once in the hotel where his gastronomic capabilities had caused the waiter to regard him with obvious amazement. The Curé de Brequier, immortalized by Brillat-Savarin, was another solitary diner, who could eat at a sitting as much food as would keep a working man in vigour for ten days. The reverend gentleman could refresh himself thus liberally under observant eyes with perfect composure. Brillat-Savarin once saw him, in less than three-quarters of an hour, sweep into his stomach a quart of soup, a plate of bouilli, a large leg of mutton, a superb ham, a copious salad, a pound or two of cheese, a prodigious quantity of bread, a bottle of water, a full bottle of wine, and a cup of coffee. "*Après quoi,*" says the narrator of this exploit, "*il se reposa.*" Severely accurate, Brillat-Savarin is careful to state that the curé did *not* eat either the ham-bone or the bone of the *gigot*.

A dinner less remarkable for grandeur, but famous for the humour of its eater, was consumed by the President of the Tribunal at Avignon.

"By my faith," said this excellent judge of law and good cheer to an interested auditor, "we have just had a superb turkey. It was excellent, stuffed to the beak with truffles, tender as a chicken, fat as

an ortolan, aromatic as a thrush. By my faith, we left nothing but its bones!"

"And how many were there of you?" inquired the curious hearer.

"Only two," answered the gourmand, with a self-complaisant smile.

"Only two?" ejaculated the simple auditor, with amazement.

"Precisely so," the lawyer answered; "only two. There was myself and there was—the turkey."

This judge was a man of infinite jest; but in gluttonous ability he was surpassed by an Englishman of letters and politics, who at his solitary dinner in an Old Bailey beef shop ate seven pounds and a half of solid meat, sliced from a round of boiled beef. As his customer ate, the keeper of the shop regarded him with increasing anger; for diners at the establishment were at liberty to eat as much as they pleased for a stated sum.

"Capital beef," said the gourmand graciously, when he at length rose from his seat, "a man may cut and come again here."

"You may cut, Sir," responded the purveyor of dinners, "but I'll be blowed if you shall come again."

The story went about the town, and in its travels encountered the famous caricaturist, who retold it in a familiar cartoon, which gave the Reverend Rowland Hill his irreverent simile for the divine grace.

"The grace of God," said the jocular but earnest preacher to the congregation whom he lured heavenwards with pleasantries, "is like a round of beef; you may cut and come again."

If historians may be believed, Grimod de la Reynière—the editor of the "Almanach des Gourmands," and uncle of the famous Count d'Orsay—had a son worthy of his epicurean father. Travelling towards Paris, Grimod de la Reynière (*père*) alighted from his carriage at the entrance of a provincial hotel, with an appetite that demanded immediate and copious satisfaction.

"Let me have for dinner," he cried, "everything good and eatable in the house."

"Alas, Sir," answered the landlord, "my larder is empty, and I can give you no dinner."

At this moment, the opening of a door enabled the epicure to see seven turkeys on a broach before a splendid fire. Sniffing the rich savour of culinary incense that came through the kitchen door, Grimod de la Reynière exclaimed indignantly,

"Are you mad or insolent? I see seven turkeys on the spit."

Again asserting that his larder was empty, the host explained that the seven noble fowls—the only good provision of the house—were on the point of being served for a young gentleman who had ordered them for his dinner.

"What! seven turkeys for one gentleman—for one *young* gentleman?" urged the amazed and hungry traveller.

"It is so," answered the Boniface.

"Conduct me to his chamber. At least he will spare me one of his seven birds!" Grimod de la Reynière implored.

The landlord consented, and in another minute the chief illuminator of Parisian gourmands was bowing courteously to the youth who, with the daring of his years, had ordered seven turkeys to be cooked for his solitary meal. The youth was De la Reynière's son.

"What!" cried the father, angrily, "is it you who ordered *seven* turkeys for your dinner?"

"Sire," said the son, with fine emotion, "pardon the apparent vulgarity of my taste and conduct, so unbecoming in one who has the honour to be your offspring. Believe me, I am the victim of circumstances. My taste, my hereditary genius impelled me to order a more varied repast. But the larder contained nothing, my host could give me nothing but the turkeys."

"But why, my dear boy," inquired the mollified parent, "be so extravagant as to order seven turkeys, when, surely, two would have been enough for your appetite?"

A smile of conscious worth and self-respect brightened the youth's visage, as he replied,

"Father, you have always told me that a turkey not stuffed with truffles comprised no part save *les-sots-les-laisserent*" (*Anglice*, "oyster," or "the parson's nose") "fit for a gentleman's plate and palate. I ordered the seven turkeys in order that I might dine off the fourteen *les-sots-les-laisserent*. What other course was open to me under the distressing circumstances?"

The father and son embraced each other. Two hours later, the elder Grimod de la Reynière proceeded on his journey full of turkey and overflowing with parental pride.

The story is excellent; but unfortunately it has been told of half-a-score fathers and sons, besides the two De la Reynières. The careful author of "The Art of Dining" assigns it to Brillat-Savarin and his eldest boy, and says that the number of turkeys roasted for the youthful *gourmet* did not exceed *four*. Such contradictions bewilder the simple reader, and dispose the critic to regard the anecdote as apocryphal. The sceptic asks whether the editor of the "Almanach des Gourmands" had a son. In the confusion of claims and uncertainty of titles, any masculine reader of this page, with a son of suitable age and taste, is at liberty to

appropriate the story and tell it of himself and his heir.

In the way of eating money, it is probable that no modern epicure has surpassed the achievement by which the Vicomte de Vieil-Castel won a wager of five hundred francs, under the eyes of half-a-score Parisians of the highest fashion, who watched the astounding performance with equal delight and amazement. Monsieur le Vicomte had undertaken to consume five hundred francs' worth of food and liquor within two hours. Of course he was allowed to order the costly repast. It consisted of twenty-four dozen Ostend oysters, thirty francs; a soup *aux nids d'hirondelles*, one hundred and fifty francs; a beef-steak, two francs; a fish (*une ferra*) from the Lake of Geneva, forty francs; a pheasant stuffed with truffles, forty francs; a salmis of ortolans, fifty francs; a dish of asparagus, fifteen francs; a plate of young peas, twelve francs; a pine-apple, twenty-four francs; a dish of strawberries, twenty francs; a bottle of Johannisberg, twenty-four francs; two bottles of Bordeaux, fifty-francs; half a bottle of Constance, forty francs; half a bottle of choice sherry, that had been to India and back, fifty francs; coffee and liqueurs, one franc fifty centimes; total, five hundred and forty-eight francs, fifty centimes. Thus the cost of the dinner exceeded the stipulated sum by forty-eight francs and

a half. The victor had sipped his concluding liqueur and café, and received the congratulations of his spectators before one hour and forty minutes had passed since he took his first oyster. Of course, both in respect to the quantity and the cost of the aliments consumed, this exploit would have been mere child's play to Lucullus dining with Lucullus. But for a modern it was a creditable performance. So that he may account for the high price of some of the items of the menu, the reader should be told that the affair came off in the middle of an unusually severe winter.

The solitary diner (if he be an epicure, and none but epicures can be justly said to dine) seldom fails in appetite for food. But he usually drinks more freely than he eats. The Vicomte de Vieil-Castel drank four bottles of wine at his little repast. "When one dines alone," said Theodore Hook, "the bottle *does* come round so fast." On being asked whether he had taken the whole of three bottles of port at a solitary dinner, without any assistance, Sir Hercules Langrishe replied, "No, not quite that, I had the assistance of a bottle of Madeira." Whilst lovers of good cheer may in their hours of loneliness humour their gulosity, to any degree of self-indulgence, without incurring social obloquy, it is generally thought scandalous for a man to drink deeply in the absence of

fellow-topers. Dr. Johnson held an exactly contrary opinion, and acted upon it. Indeed when he allowed himself the rather discreditable pleasure of drunkenness, he disdained to take it in festal society. "Sir," he once said to Boswell, "I do not say it is wrong to produce self-complacency by drinking; I only deny that it improves the mind. When I drank wine, I scorned to drink it when in company. I have drunk many a bottle by myself; in the first place, because I had need of it to raise my spirits, in the second place, because I would have nobody to witness its effects upon me."

The auricular nerves being intimately related with the nerves of the nose and palate, it is not strange that whatever afflicts the hearing is prejudicial to a process which appeals directly to the taste and smell. Always averse to noise whilst they are eating, epicures shrink instinctively from speakers with harsh and overbearing voices. It is the reverse with mere gluttons. Always noisy at meat, both in their speech and their manner of eating, gross feeders delight in uproar and riotous associates. Some epicures are so sensitive of sound, that, whilst tumultuous clamour completely paralyses their palates, they require perfect silence in order to appreciate delicate flavours. "Ah, gentlemen, keep a little quiet, one does not know

what one is eating," said Montmaur, the French *gourmet*, who fed nicely in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, and who, in his reasonable recognition of the piquancy which his discreetly exercised wit gave to a repast, used to say to his friends, " You find the meats and wine, and I will find the salt." It is on record that Thackeray—a man of fine gust as well as of lofty genius—required unbroken silence for the full enjoyment of a dish of superlative merit. In order that justice should be done to a *matelote* of exquisite goodness, served at a Parisian dinner, he paused after the first taste of the charming preparation, and turning to Mr. Hayward, said beseechingly, " My dear fellow, don't let us speak a word till we have finished this dish." The novelist, by the way, is said to have been the first to discover that, to be perfect, a curry should contain a slight flavour of crab.

For the highest gastronomic pleasure, silence was no less necessary to the famous Marquis of Hertford, the wicked lord whose portrait may be found in the pages of Thackeray, Disraeli, and Reynolds, to say nothing of a score other novelists. A man of wit, who relished wit in his companions, the Marquis was also a consummate epicure, who held that, whilst sprightly conversation heightened the delights of the table, it should be jealously used as nothing more than a subordinate influence towards

the higher enjoyments. Theodore Hook was the most judicious of table talkers. Jubilant over his claret at dessert; and vociferously hilarious towards early morning over his gin-and-water, he bridled his frolicsomeness at the epicurean board. His talk between the soup and the cheese consisted of gently stimulating pleasantries, thrown about in the intervals between courses. On the appearance of each fresh course he grew taciturn. Whilst a culinary work of extraordinary excellence was under consideration, he was always as silent as death. His great influence with his patron was largely due to his discretion at table.

Never jealous of young aspirants in the social arts, and above all things sedulous for his patron's amusement, Theodore sometimes introduced to the Marquis's table a new talker about town. His selections of candidates for preferment from the rising generation of "diners out" were never made without consideration, and rarely failed to achieve their object. On one occasion, however, he committed the serious blunder of bringing to one of his lord's "little dinners" a gentleman who, in his zeal to fascinate the noble entertainer, forgot that colloquial smartness is not more requisite than ability to keep silence in a professional parasite.

"Don't bring that young gentleman again," the

Marquis observed on the following day to his chief jester.

"He told some good stories," Hook urged, at the same time defending himself and the absent culprit.

"True," returned the Marquis, "I will not do him an injustice. He has a very good collection of stories, and he tells them with considerable cleverness; but, my dear Hook, he does not know *when* to tell them. I was in the middle of that charming matelote, as perfect a thing as my man ever sent to table, when he disturbed me with an epigram. It was a good *jeu d'esprit*, doubtless. So much the worse for me and my matelote. A bad *mot* would have occasioned me less disturbance. I may not be ruffled in that way, my dear Hook, when I am dining."

Gallantly fighting for his protégé, Hook replied, "The honour of dining with you, my lord, elated him, and made him too talkative. Moreover, he would have done better had he been less anxious to impress you favourably."

Never deficient in generosity to his friends, or in good breeding to his enemies, the Marquis relented. "Well, Hook," he said, graciously, "you may bring him again *next season*, when you have trained him to good manners. I'll give him another chance. The

animal has some good points ; but at present he is only a half-broken colt."

This story should be taken to heart by young "lions" and other adventurers, who would talk themselves into favour at the tables of "the great." Lordly entertainers are not always so forbearing and lenient as the Marquis of Hertford, who gave the offender of the story a second chance. Many a smart adventurer, after gaining admission to great houses, and figuring for a season as a "man in society," has been dropped in the ensuing year by the fastidious patrons whom he has offended by overbearing or excessive loquacity at dinners to which he was invited "on trial."

"A guest," says Dick Humelbergius Secundus, in the "Apician Morsels" (1829) "who knows, through the medium of a conversation, as original as decent and humorous, how to captivate the attention of the numerous guests who surround and listen to him, may assure himself that he will always be sought after, and consequently invited by the host for whom he becomes a powerful auxiliary at dinners which he may be pleased to offer his friends." But to succeed in his more difficult than lofty vocation, it is not enough for the commensal to talk cleverly on several subjects and give new points to old stories. His speech must be seasonable and considerate, or, whatever its vivacity and

abundance, it will diminish the satisfaction of the company. His first duty is to please, and to accomplish this end he must assist others to shine whilst displaying his own brilliance. Instead of extorting attention he should render it. Playing the part of a courteous and sympathetic listener, he should smile complacently at badly delivered anecdotes, and feign contentment when he is irked by prosy gossips, or irritated by his professional competitors. Above all things he should refrain from raising a laugh to the sacrifice of a sauce, or to the prejudice of a gastronomic sensation.

Some epicures are so sensitive of noise, that for the full appreciation of delicate fare they require, in addition to silence, a sense of security from auricular disturbances. To these scarcely fortunate though finely organised beings, the mere presence of companions who may be startled into inopportune speech, or of servants who may destroy the voluptuous stillness by dropping a fork or glass, is enough to create a nervous unrest incompatible with perfect felicity. The gastronomer, thus delicately or morbidly constituted, seldom consents to dine at a table set for more than three persons. Shrinking from the bare imagination of a possibility of agonizing interruption, he prefers to dine by himself, and to ensure the requisite tranquillity by dispensing, as far as possible, with attendants. If he permits a servant

to watch him at his repast, the menial wears list slippers, breathes lightly, and has been retained on the understanding that immediate dismissal from his office will follow the first noisy *faux pas* that he may commit in the performance of his duties. It is, however, more usual for the gourmand of extremely sensitive hearing to eat in perfect solitude, his attendant retiring, after the service of each course, to an ante-room, whence he can be summoned or otherwise ordered by the noiseless signals of an "indicator," similar to the contrivance which an ingenious coach-builder has recently substituted for the carriage check-string. The "revolving dumb-waiter," to be placed on the solitaire's dining-table, is another arrangement for the epicure who desires complete isolation at his meals. The volant table, invented by Louis the Fifteenth and the Pompadour, may also be adapted to the requirements of the solitary eater, who, by means of the beautiful invention, may receive all the courses of an elaborate banquet from the hands of invisible and inaudible ministers. By pressing a spring gently at the close of each course, he causes his table to descend slowly through the floor, and then, after the lapse of a few minutes, he sees it rise silently, and place within his reach a fresh supply of culinary comforts. The only grave objection to this magical table is that its delicate mechanism is liable to disarrangement

through the neglect or clumsiness of servants. Its provisions, however, ensure perfect noiselessness, if the flaps or sliding panels of the trap door are properly padded. Of course, it is needless to remind the fairly educated readers of this page that Louis the Fifteenth's volant table was constructed for a party of thirty, and that the purpose of its joint inventors was not to compass silence at meals, but to afford a numerous company the greatest possible amount of privacy and perfect freedom from the embarrassing attentions of servitors. Had such a table been known to our ancestors of Alexander Barclay's time, it would have been commended by the censorious poet who, assailing with equal severity servants and their masters, wrote :—

“ Slowe be the sewers in serving in alway,
But swift be they after, taking the meate away;
A speciall custom is used them amonge,
No good dishe to suffer on borde to be longe;
If the dishe be pleasaunt, eyther fleshe or fyshe,
Ten handes at once swarne in the dishe;
And if it be fleshe ten knives shalt thou see,
Mangling the fleshe, and in the platter flee,
To put there thy handes is perill without fayle,
Without a gauntlet, or els a glove of mayle.”

Quin only reproduced an old sarcasm when he declared that no one could dine safely at a civic turtle-feast, unless he went to it armed with “a basket-hilted knife and fork.” In the sixteenth

century the volant board would not have improved the manner of the gentlefolk who fed themselves with their fingers; but it would have preserved them from the officiousness of liveried menials. In recent times, the general distrust of servants who may report maliciously the incautious speeches uttered at table, has been increased by the odious practice of employing them as political spies.

Though a dozen is the highest number of feasters for a social party, any greater number, with a single exception, may be invited to the board which is spread for ceremonious and ostentatious hospitality. Banquets for twelve times twelve persons, and for still larger companies, are of frequent occurrence. The Duke of Norfolk, mentioned by Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, would not have relinquished his purpose of celebrating the ter-centenary of his ancestor's exaltation with a dinner to all his living kindred, had the descendants of Jock of Norfolk numbered no more than three thousand.

It remains to say a few words of the single exception to the rule that declares all numbers "good for a feast." Whilst his vigorous and subtle mind regarded vulgar superstitions disdainfully, Comte could not liberate himself from the fascination of numbers. Thirteen had a peculiar charm for him, as the seventh prime number, *i.e.*, the seventh number that has no factors. He experienced an animating

sense of good fortune whenever he found himself at table with twelve other companions. In nothing was he more eccentric than in this preference for a number that has for centuries been regarded as the number of evil omen.

The dismal incidents which followed the Last Supper occasioned the ancient opinion that whenever thirteen, and no more, persons broke bread together, death would in the following year take at least one of the party. Writing in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, Peter du Moulin (styled pedantically Petrus Molinœus) observed, "If there are thirteen guests at a feast, it is believed that one of them will die within the year; for just so many persons reclined at table when Christ celebrated the Eucharist on the day before he died. Thus, also, amongst the superstitious thirty is a number of evil omen, because Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver." The superstitious repugnance to thirty has not endured. That number is commonly seen at the pompous dinners of our London entertainers, and it never causes uneasiness or provokes remark. But the prejudice against "thirteen" still endures. It affects even vigorous minds, who are none the less troubled by it because they are aware that an average mortality removes yearly from the world at least one out of every thirteen persons of middle or old age. Lord Chancellor Erskine could never be in-

duced to seat himself at a table with only twelve other people; and the same nervous dislike to be one of thirteen at a social meeting is felt by a considerable proportion of educated Englishmen, who are secretly ashamed of their weakness in yielding to a superstitious fancy.

Some years since poor Albert Smith gave a supper of thirteen that discredited the superstition in a remarkable manner. Himself on the point of starting for China, he entertained twelve friends who were bound for the Crimea, to encounter the perils of war as military officers, or as journalists reporting the incidents of the conflict. Deeming it in the highest degree improbable that they would meet again on English ground when they had once started for the scene of danger, the twelve guests met their host with light hearts, and laughed about the fate which some of them would of course encounter in a few months. Strangely enough, all twelve returned from the war in perfect health, and supped again at a table of thirteen with the humorous lecturer.

Mindful of the slowly-dying superstition, which “dying hard” is still powerful over a large proportion of ordinary minds, the prudent Amphitryon thinks twice before he arranges for a party of fourteen, since a single “failure at the last moment” would reduce the company to the fatal number. If he has

in reserve a trencher-man, whom he can summon at the last instant to act as *quatorzième*, or a child whom he can place in a vacant chair, he orders for fourteen without misgivings. But in default of such resources against untoward accident, he limits his party to twelve or raises it to sixteen. In George the Third's time, it was thought that thirteen persons might safely dine together if the party comprised a lady with reasonable hopes of adding to the population in the course of a few weeks. Reference is made to this opinion by a correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine" for July, 1796. The French of the same period held that thirteen persons might sit together at the same board and yet escape the penalty, if one of the party, sacrificing himself for the rest of the company, refrained from partaking of the cheer. Grimod de la Reynière was of this opinion.

At the same time it was generally believed by our grandfathers, that Paris contained a select body of "diners-out" who subsisted chiefly by officiating as guests at tables where the presence of a professional *quatorzième* was requisite for the company's contentment. Even so late as thirty years since a writer in one of our magazines described, with excellent minuteness, a gentlemen who occupying an apartment within a stone's throw of the Palais Royal, had long followed the calling of a fourteenth guest

in the highest circles of French society. For a moderate fee and a good dinner he appeared on the shortest notice at the social board of any of his patrons; and when on duty he never failed to charm by his agreeable address the persons with whom it was no less his business than his pleasure to dine on terms of apparent equality. The professional *quatorzième* of Parisian society was the purely fictitious creation of the humorists. But fiction treated him so realistically that he was long regarded as a veritable personage on this side of the Channel. And laughingly enough, whilst Londoners believed in the Parisian *quatorzième* as a recognized power of good society in France, the Parisians amused themselves by telling how, in that equally ludicrous and perfidious Albion, it was usual for gentlemen of narrow means to earn a precarious subsistence by letting themselves out as *quatorzièmes* to aristocratic entertainers. We have outgrown our belief in the *quatorzième* of Paris; but Paris still believes in the professional “fourteenth” of the English dinner-table. Some three years since a French illustrator of the English and their ways, told the readers of a leading Parisian journal how a certain Monsieur Fitzjones, residing in a highly fashionable street near Leyssterre Squarr, earned his daily dinner and piece of gold by appearing as *quatorzième* at the table of a rich milord or Sir Baron.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOUP.

"I hate French cooks, but love their wine;
 On fricassee I scorn to dine,
 And bad's the best ragout;
 Let me of claret have my fill,
 Let me have turtle to my will,
 In one large mighty stew

"A napkin let my temples bind,
 In night-gown free and unconfined,
 And undisturbed by women;
 All boons in one I ask of fate,
 At city feasts to eat my weight,
 And drink enough to swim in."

THE ALDERMAN'S WISH.

"Il faut manger sa soupe bouillante, et prendre son café brulant.'
 —ALMANACH DES GOURMANDS.

THEODORE HOOK enjoyed soup and fish till he merrily declined a plate of turtle on the plea that he was not a soup-or-fish-al person. The pun became famous, and, to support it with consistent behaviour, the jester henceforth abstained from the two species of nutriment.

Like the Romans, our mediæval ancestors were large consumers of soups. They had flesh-broths, fish-pottages, vegetable-soups, and soups concocted in various proportions of meat and vegetables, and

of fish and vegetables. The pot, as we have seen, was their commonest cooking utensil, and pottage was their commonest diet. Some of their richest soups contained so much meat or fish that the culinary historian doubts whether he should not rank them with broths or hashes. These same pottages were also thickened with grain and meal. In his fondness for fluid food, the mediæval epicure could seldom relish meat until he had drowned it with pottage-liquor. He covered his slice from a haunch of venison with frumenty *i.e.* wheat-pottage—a preparation that, still seen at rude tables in the provinces, was banished long since from polite boards in favour of bread-sauce. “When I consider bread-sauce in all its branches, I am proud that I am an Englishman,” a Regency epicure said of the modern substitute for the obsolete frumenty. The French deride our bread-sauce, calling it poultice, and maintaining that it should be used only by surgeons.

Consisting altogether of water and herbs, the thinnest of the old vegetable soups were properly called herb-pottages. The Church commended them as fit diet for meagre days; and in seasons of fasting they still find favour with the religious persons who observe the Church’s culinary ordinances. Nourishing in the lowest degree, they are sometimes agreeable to the educated feeder if pre-

pared cleverly. Concocted according to ancient receipts, they are interesting to the antiquary, who regards them as “survivals” of the culinary medicine which was so largely present in the mediæval cuisine. When physic was invariably administered in the form of herbs, green-meat pottages were given for curative purposes. Like the other medicinal compounds of the period, these spoon-food stomach mixtures contained from a score to half a hundred herbal ingredients, each of which was prescribed for the consumer’s health.

Delighting in hot soups, our ancestors were also great consumers of cold pottage. An old rhymster says :

“Peas-porridge hot,
Peas-porridge cold,
Peas-porridge in a pot,
Nine days old.”

Of all the thick soups which he lapped with ecstasy in their fluid state, there was not one from which the old epicure turned when it had cooled into substance, and acquired the consistency of the mortrew, the jelly, and the standing compote. But to win his unqualified approval, it was necessary that a cold soup should contain a large number of “brawns” stewed to such tenderness that they melted in the mouth. When the mediæval cook said “Take brawns,” he meant “Take pieces of

flesh." The rich meat soups of old time were made chiefly of "brawns," chopped in "gobbets" and "dices," that floated in a hot fluid, thickened with meal and pounded flesh. Served cold and "chargeant," these soups were commonly called "brawns" long before an ingenious chef produced the "collar" and "shield" of "brawn proper." This should be borne in mind, for it gives the etymology and pedigree of our modern "brawns," those gelatinous viands that are never regarded at breakfast or supper without approval.

In the earlier centuries of our feudal time, meats were almost always served with more or less juice, in goblets, slices, or dices. In the later centuries of the same period, it became usual with the best chefs to serve "large pieces" of flesh in their pottages, taking care, however, that these nobler masses were boiled to extreme tenderness. Pieces, that in course of time came to be called "joints," were thus boiled for the Tudor tables and served in a rich broth of meat-juice and vegetables. Calves' heads, gigots, and rounds of beef were cooked whole in this fashion, and at table the "pieces" so cooked and served were, for the carver's convenience, taken from their deep soup-dishes and put on flat trenchers. The modern "joint" in its separate dish owes its place on the festal board to this olden mode of transferring from

the pot to flat dishes the larger ingredients of the “pot’s luck.” So also the fashion, not yet quite obsolete, of garnishing boiled joints with boiled carrots, turnips, parsnips and other vegetables, points to the period when such “pieces” were brought to the board in a large deep vessel, brimming with the multifarious contents of the big kitchen pot. “Another time,” says Misson, describing English cookery at the close of the seventeenth century, “they will have a piece of boiled beef, and then they salt it some days beforehand and besiege it with five or six heaps of cabbages, carrots, turnips, or some other herbs or roots, well peppered and salted, and swimming in butter.” And he adds, “When they have boiled meat, there is sometimes one in the company that will have the broth; this is a kind of soup, with a little thin oatmeal in it and some leaves of thyme and sage, or other such small herbs. They bring up this in as many porringers as there are people that desire it; those that please crumble a little bread into it, and this makes a kind of pottage.” Misson put his feet under the English table just at the time when it became the fashion to serve the boiled meat and pot-liquor separately, instead of bringing them to table in the same vessel.

Pork, beloved by our feudal fathers as fervently as by the ancient Romans, was of all meats the

flesh most liberally thrown into the pot; and whilst “coddling” it to exquisite softness, with a view to cold soup of superlative merit, the old English cooks became connoisseurs of the material, and consummate makers of “brawn.” The meat was stewed slowly and for several hours. It might remain in the pot almost any length of time without injury to its virtues; but it was never taken from the seething vessel until it was so tender that “a brused rush or soft straw could be thrust cleane through the fat.” In order that they should not be “done to rags” by this process, the pieces of swine’s flesh were bound round with bulrushes, osier-peels, tape, or string, before they were put into the water. On being taken from the boiler they were exposed to cooling air, and when they had acquired firmness they were “soused” for several days in good ale, or in beer seasoned with verjuice and salt, the sousing liquor being renewed from time to time. For the manufacture of this “brawn,” pork of the finest quality was used. “Collars of brawn” were made from the boned neck-pieces, whilst “shields of brawn” were made from the shoulders. Brawn proper was seldom made of any but the fore parts of the animal; the flesh of the hinder parts being designated “souse,” when it had been duly sodden and pickled.

A viand peculiarly English, brawn was highly

esteemed by our ancestors, who placed it on their tables at dinner and supper on almost every flesh-day between the first of November and the last of February. At the same season on fish-days they ate slices of cold fish-porridge, which was prepared so as to resemble pork brawn; and this gelatinous fish-food was sometimes called “brawn.”

William Harrison is at great pains to describe the processes for making brawn, and he gives us several stories which exhibit our ancestors’ pride in the national dainty. In their ignorance of its nature, the French cooks, after the fall of Calais, destroyed most of the large stock of brawn found in the city by attempting to roast, bake, broil, or fry the delicate fare. Supposing that it was made of fish, a pious French gentleman had imperilled his soul’s salvation by eating in Lent a quantity of “souse” sent out to him by an English nobleman. Better still, an English humourist, whilst residing in Spain, had entertained certain Jews with the forbidden meat, and in their simplicity the wretched Israelites had literally gorged themselves with “shields” and “collars” of the unclean viand.

The English soups of the seventeenth century differed little from the soups of the mediæval English, save that they sometimes contained joints of meat instead of gobbets. Cotgrave makes honourable mention of several varieties of oat-meal pottage,

as “meates very wholesome and temperate, and light of digestion,” the best of them being the ale-porridge, or groat-ale, *i.e.* oat-meal soup, made with malt-liquor instead of water. From this “groat-ale,” rendered in base Latin *grutellum*, came the modern term “gruel.” Daisy soup was an Elizabethan herb-pottage (good for the brain), of which the modern epicure would rather read than partake. The same may be said of nettle-soup, highly commended by the old doctors for “procuring sleep,” “helping coughs,” and assuaging the gout. Another medicinal pottage of the seventeenth century was snail-soup, made of garden-snails, earth-worms, a score or more herbs, and strong ale, boiled together and strained. As the squeamish reader will soon be invited to relish a plate of turtle, he shall not be told too precisely how this choice concoction was prepared for the special benefit of invalids stricken with consumption. It is enough to say, that snail-broth held its place in culinary medicine so late as the beginning of this century, and that an elaborate receipt for preparing it may be found in “The Pastry-Cook’s Vade Mecum” (1705).

So long as the English of every social grade were habitual consumers of pottage, their dames and soldiers were as clever at making palatable broths “out of nothing” as the French are at the present time. It was a common saying with our thrifty

housewives two centuries and more since, that any simpleton could make a soup with a little salt, a can of water, and a handful of garden stuff. Giles Rose re-tells the story of the two soldiers, one of whom went without broth, whilst the other made excellent pottage from a stone. The fellow who begged at an open door for all the materials for a simple pottage, was told that he required too much and must go elsewhere. His comrade, taking a stone from his knapsack, asked only for a pot in which to boil his stone. Even a miser would have granted so modest a request. The pot was supplied, and soon the wily soldier was boiling a large stone under the curious eyes of half-a-dozen bystanders. Could one of them give him a little salt? the cook asked. The salt was given. A minute later the cook observed, "A few herbs make a pleasant seasoning for stone-broth, but I must manage for once to relish soup without a perfect flavour." In a trice one of the spectators threw a bundle of herbs into the pot, saying, "So clever a fellow ought to have a soup to his taste when he shows us how to make it of a stone." After another while the adventurer observed, "Stone-broth is good broth, but there is no question that a scrap of meat or bacon brings out the flavour of a flint-stone." Half-an-hour had not passed since his arrival at the house, when the soldier was enjoying an excellent pottage made of

the materials supplied by his spectators for the *improvement* of his broth.

Stone-broth made in this manner was as rich and nutritious as several of the soups served on meagre days to the quality of Charles the Second's London. That sovereign's chef, Giles Rose, gives receipts for several pottages that may have amused the palate, but can have afforded no satisfaction to the empty belly. For instance, his Herb Pottage without Butter was made of herbs, water, a slice or two of bread, and a few capers to render the mess a "little sowerish." His Bran Pottage—the strained liquor, in which bran, a handful of almonds, and a few sweet herbs had been boiled—was another broth that a saintly man might take on Friday with an easy conscience, or an invalid drink without fearing its inflammatory power. Another of the same artiste's cheaper vegetable soups was Pompeion (or Pumpkin) Broth. Mr. Rose's Snow Pottage—made like the mediæval white-soups, of milk, eggs, rice, and sugar—was a richer, as well as more agreeable, soup for fast days. In the time of many fish-soups, however, there was no lack of generous and highly nutritious broths for carnally-disposed feeders on saints' days. For instance, "Potage à la Reyne" was an eel-soup, to gratify an epicure's gust or stay a farmer's appetite. Sole, carp, tench, indeed all the fishes commonly brought to table, were also

served in pottages that would now-a-days be called “stews” and “hashes.”

Mock-turtle soup was known to our ancestors long before they made acquaintance with real turtle. The mediæval gourmands delighted in calf’s-head broth, whose thick and lubricous liquor was loaded with strips of the gelatinous viand. The Restoration epicures preferred another cookery for the head. Instead of cutting it into pieces, they removed the bones, stuffed it with force-meat, and, after boiling it to proper tenderness, put it whole upon the table in a dish brimming with broth. Using his knife and the new fork, the carver distributed slices of the head with each apportionment of the soup, and sometimes for his convenience removed the viand from the broth-bowl to an adjacent trencher. Hence “calf’s-head” is another of the “modern joints” that were served in the pot together with other elements before they were promoted to separate dishes, and made to figure as *pièces de résistance*.

In default of turtle—a material which, strange to say, did not find its way to the English table till we had held our West Indian possessions for several generations—the Restoration cooks made with the flesh of the land-tortoise a pottage of considerable merit, though inferior in every respect to the soup which renders the sea-tortoise glorious in death.

“Take your tortoises,” says Giles Rose, “and cut off their heads and feet, and boyl them in fair water, and when they are almost boyl’d put to them some white wine, some sweet herbs, and a piece of bacon, and give them a brown in the frying-pan with good butter, then lay them upon your bread a-steeping in good strong broth, and well-seasoned ; garnish the dish with green sparrow-grass and lemon over it.” It is questionable whether tortoise-soup ever held a high place amongst gastronomic creations, but it appeared from time to time in the menus of fastidious epicures, till it was banished from the kitchen on the introduction of turtle.

In language alike creditable to his head and his heart, the learned author of the “*Tabella Cibaria*” (1820) says of the turtle, “This splendid and delicate gift, sent from the Transatlantic Nereids to the gastronomers of the old world, could not be known to the ancients, and we regret that the pens of Martial, Juvenal, and Horace had not to describe the three-fold quality found in the flesh of this enormous reptile and amphibious animal. How harmoniously calipash and calipee, tasting accidentally so much of Grecian origin, might have begun Hexameter, or ended Iambic verses ! For instance,

“*Callipash hinc gustum languentem provocat, inde
Novum ministrat appetitum Callipee.*

"And it seems a pity that the tortoise, the shell of which was adapted to the lyre of Mercury, had not the gratification to accompany the dithyrambic odes composed, as they would have been, in enthusiastic praise of her testaceous sister, the turtle. Some travellers mention the turtle as an inhabitant of the East Indian seas; but the nautical knowledge of the Greeks and Romans was so very confined that, were this assertion positively true, they would not have obtained a sufficient acquaintance with this excellent food. However, it never appeared upon their tables."

The turtle found its way to London *via* Bristol. It was still a dainty seldom seen at the richest tables of the metropolis, when the merchants of the western port feasted habitually on the grandest of all soups. The recent developments of British commerce have enabled several of our subordinate cities to surpass Bristol in wealth and populousness. She is no longer the "second city of the Empire;" but time cannot rob her of the right to boast that her sons were the first inhabitants of Great Britain to appreciate the virtues of the turtle. Apart from this fact, a singular uncertainty covers the whole history of the creature's introduction to the modern table. When a writer on *The World* (No. 123, May 8, 1755), noticed the new food, it was a luxury often seen at the feasts of our richer epicures.

A passage in Lord Lyttleton's "Dialogues of the Dead," supports the general opinion that it was first brought to our tables between the years 1740 and 1750. There is no doubt that it was a principal feature of civic banquets long before the second George had closed his exemplary career. At the beginning of the present century, six pounds (live weight) of turtle was deemed a fairly liberal provision for each guest at a solemn dinner. The four hundred gentlemen who feasted off turtle at the City of London Tavern, in August, 1808, managed to consume without any fatal accident or immediate discomfort, twenty-five thousand pounds of the delicious fare.

In the days of our grandfathers, few men were more notorious in London than Samuel Birch, the best confectioner in "the city," and first purveyor of turtle-soup in the whole capital. Inheriting a fine business from his father, the famous Cheapside pastrycook drew to his shop epicures from every quarter of the town. The merchant, who slipt away from his office at mid-day for "a plate of turtle at Birch's," took his luncheon in a room thronged with gourmets from the Inns of Court, and dandies from Bond Street. Forest venison could be bought at Birch's, as well as all the good things usually provided at a restaurant. But during the turtle season No. 15, Cornhill was

emphatically a turtle house, and customers seldom entered it without a view to turtle. "On the tables," says Dick Humelbergius Secundus, "are placed the lemons, cayenne, and other condiments, with toasted French bread for the free use of the visitants."

But Samuel Birch, whose business passed eventually to Messrs. Ring and Rymer of gastronomic renown, was much more than a successful dealer in table delicacies. A man of wit and letters, he produced plays that held the stage, and books that are still readable, though seldom read. One of his musical dramas, "The Adopted Child," was popular long after the author had killed his last turtle and breathed his last breath. His temper was so amiable and his humour so lively that he heartily enjoyed the joke when, on his appointment to be colonel of the City Militia, it was proposed to style him Marshal *Tureen*. "By all means," the confectioner cried gaily to the originator of this witticism, a brother officer in the Militia who, as a great flour and corn merchant, regarded confectioners disdainfully, "and you shall be Marshal *Sacks*." Scarcely had the dealer in flour, a pompous and choleric gentleman, felt the first sting of this blow from the Birch, when his annoyance was increased by a roar of laughter from the hearers of the smart reply. Neither of the prin-

cipals in this duel survived his recollection of the affair. But whilst Birch always smiled cheerily at acquaintances who greeted him as Marshal Tureen, the “other marshal” reddened with rage whenever an allusion to “sacks” was made in his hearing. An efficient officer of his regiment, Marshal Tureen gained some credit as a military author from his essay on “National Defence.”

So cheery and clever a gentleman as Mr. Birch could not fail to win the approval of his fellow-citizens. Throwing himself into local politics, he figured as common councillor, alderman, and Lord Mayor, the year of his mayoralty being the famous 1815. When Chantrey’s statue of George the Third was placed in the Council Chamber of Guildhall, during the Waterloo year, Birch’s pen produced the inscription for it. Fortunate in business and friendship, this prince of pastrycooks was also fortunate in his children. His daughter married Lamartine the poet, and one of his sons, a good classic student, begot a family of scholars.

With the exception of their lightest meagre soups, some of which were almost as thin as water, our ancestors’ soups were notable for thickness. Most of their vegetable pottages were thickened with meat and grain, and most of their fish broths were unstrained messes that on cooling resembled brawn in firmness and substantiality. The flesh soups,

like our “mock turtle” and ox-tail,” were served with pieces of flesh floating in their heavy liquor. The clear gravy soup of the modern English table is a comparatively recent invention, which resulted from the efforts of chefs to enrich their meagre soups with forbidden ingredients, and at the same time escape clerical detection and censure.

It is told of the Count de Flavigny, whilom French Minister at Parma, that he commanded his chef, Leblanc, to learn how the *garbures* served on meagre days at the Hôtel de Noailles were prepared. Being on friendly terms with the maker of these *garbures*, Leblanc had no great trouble in ascertaining that their excellence was due to a subtle use of gravy extracted from white meats. The chef, who thus dared to disobey the rules of the church, was at infinite pains to clarify the meat juice, which he furtively added to his clear herb pottages, alike to the advancement of his fame and the delight of his patron. The “doctored” *garbures* being in no degree discoloured or clouded by the clear gravy, their unusual goodness was attributed to the pious skill of the cook, who was applauded for superior art when he should have been punished for satanic artifice.

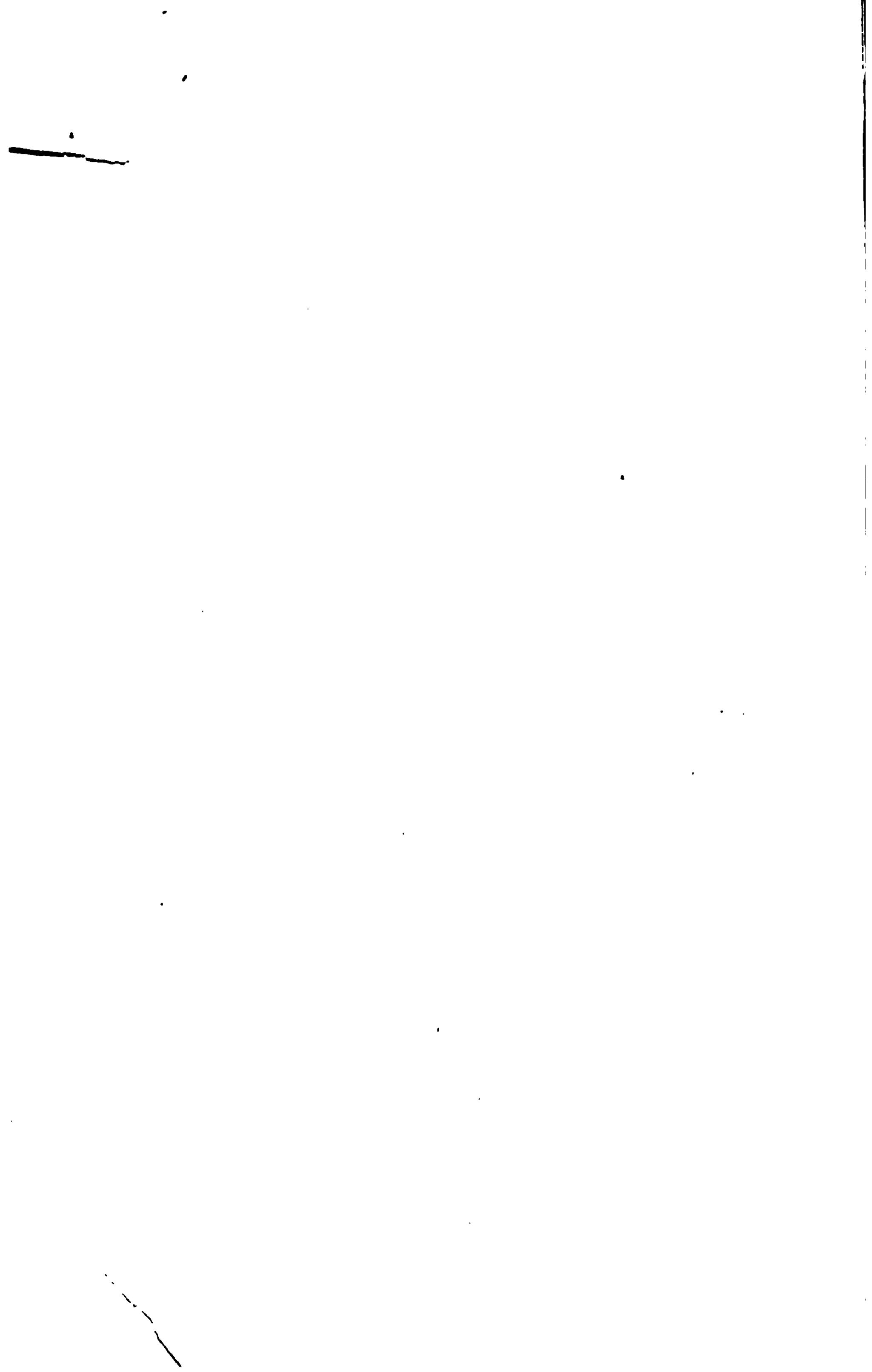
Acting on instructions that were given in strict confidence, Leblanc became no less famous than his teacher as a maker of *garbures*. In Paris, the

Count's table on fast days was never without guests who by merest accident happened to "drop in" at his dinner hour. The friends who surrounded him at his country seat were no less delighted with his meagre pottages. Leblanc was pressed on all sides with entreaties for the secret of his success. No one was more curious and urgent for enlightenment than the curé of the parish in which Flavigny's estate lay. But Leblanc was faithful to his promise of secrecy. "Sir curate," he answered his clerical petitioner, "I will tell you how I make my *garbures* when you are a bishop." Leblanc subsequently kept a Restaurant in the Rue de la Harpe, where he added to his renown by the ham pies which Grimod de la Reynière could never mention without emotion.

The practice of strengthening clear maigre broths with the colourless juice of white meats having become general, it was not long before chefs produced clear soups, that strong with the gravy of red meats, pleased the eye whilst charming the palate. Of clear gravy soup there are, at least, a hundred varieties.

A BOOK ABOUT THE TABLE.

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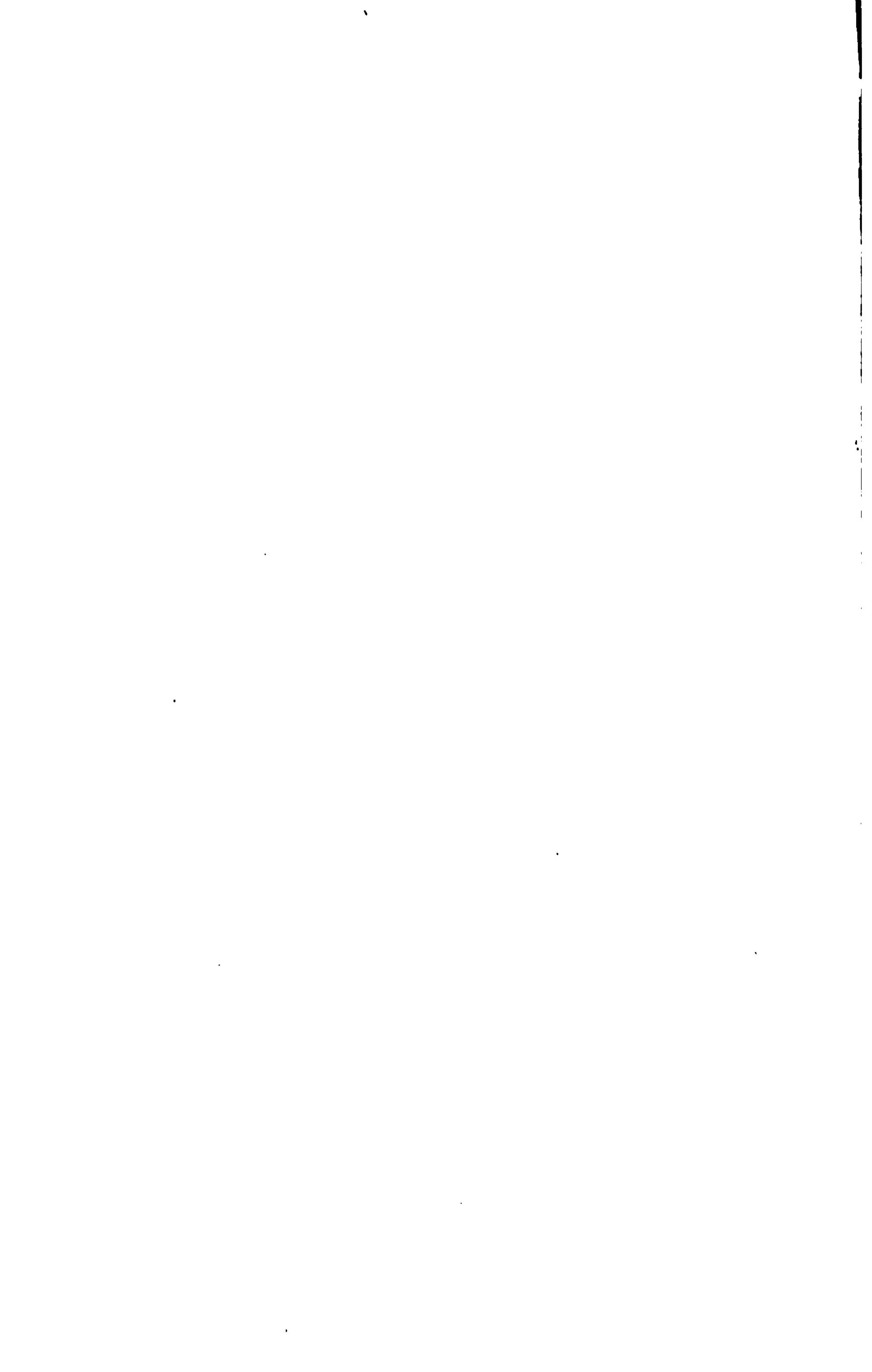


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A BOOK ABOUT THE TABLE.

CHAPTER I.

FISH.

"The King's Bench Reports have cook'd up an odd dish,
An action for damages, Fry against Fish,
But sure, if for damages action could lie,
It certainly must have been Fish against Fry."

MORNING CHRONICLE "EPIGRAMS."

"Le *white-bait*, poisson blanc, est à coup sûr un des mets les plus populaires de Londres. Je me rappelle avoir été invité, sans autre motif qu'invitation ordinaire, par un de mes amis qui arrivait de l'Inde, à venir manger les *white-bait* à Grennisch."—ALEXANDRE DUMAS, "GRAND DICTIONNAIRE DE CUISINE."

"At Greenwich, having already partaken of plain white-bait, I helped myself to some out of a second dish; it was devilled and fitted for skinning the tongue."—M. Taine's "NOTES ON ENGLAND,"
Translated by W. F. Rae.

TO discredit our ancestors, as judges of fish, it is enough to say that they sugared their oysters, and prized the pike more highly than any other fish. If the reader requires further evidence of their inability to appreciate the finer flavours of the inhabitants of the water, he may find it in the scores of old receipts for stews and messes, in which a dozen different kinds of fish were mingled, so that

it was impossible for the palate to distinguish the various ingredients of the dish.

Official records put it beyond question that the pike was thus honoured by our discerning fore-fathers. Edward the First's advisers gave the luce (*i.e.*, pike) a higher value than fresh salmon, and rated it at ten times the worth of the best turbot and cod. Though its market price fell in times of abundance, it was in great request for luxurious tables throughout the dark ages of our gastronomic history. One of Chaucer's worthies—the “frankelein” who “was Epicure's owen sone”—is especially commended for always having “many a breme and many a luce in stewe.” In our eighth Henry's time, whilst a large pike would ordinarily fetch twice the price of a house lamb, a small one (*i.e.*, a pickerel) commonly sold for more than a fat capon. Indeed, so long as they ate fish from religious sentiment or servile submission to economic ordinances, the English knew little of the distinctive excellences of the finny creatures. On ceasing to devour them as good Christians or good citizens, they began to study and enjoy them as good epicures.

“Pike,” says Mr. Hayward, “are capital if bled in the tail and gills as soon as caught; they die much whiter, and look better at table. Pike is capitally dressed at the White Hart, at Salisbury.”

A familiar adage trains us to look for differences of taste and sentiment in culinary affairs. The epicure who thinks pike "capital" is all the more likely to have enough of the good thing, because another epicure thinks it a bad one. It may, however, be questioned whether pike can by any cooking be rendered "capital" to the fastidious feeder. Possibly Mr. Hayward only meant that the fish cooked in his way was capital in comparison with pike cooked otherwise. To form the most favourable opinion of pike, the reader should boil an eight-pound fish in *salt* water, and on the morrow, when it has cooled and "flakes" readily, fry the flakes with butter. Pike so managed is decent food, but not capital.

In using the old word "luce," readers should remember that in strict parlance it is not applicable to a young fish, or indeed to any pike whose growth was incomplete. The Elizabethan pike had seven ages. It was first called a fry, then a gilthead, then a pod, then a jack, then a pickerel, then a pike, and, finally, on attaining its full size, a luce. The salmon had four ages; beginning life as a gravellin, it became a salmon-peale, then a pug, and finally a salmon proper.

It was some pike-gorging glutton of the fifteenth century who threw a large pike into the Kaiserwag lake, after fitting its neck and gills with a brass ring, bearing the inscription, "I am the fish which

was first of all put into this lake by the hands of the Governor of the Universe, Frederick II., the 5th October, 1230." The joke succeeded beyond the hopes of the practical jester. After astounding the fisherman, who had the good fortune to net it, this collar-wearing pike was exhibited to thousands of credulous believers in the lying legend, and figured for generations amongst the marvels of the universe. A score of books have been written to demonstrate the truth or falseness of its alleged history ; and the authors who allude cursorily to its capture and the ensuing controversy may be counted by hundreds. What passed for the pike's skeleton was long exhibited in the Mannheim Cathedral, until a prying, meddlesome anatomist, own brother to Wordsworth's "physician," discovered that the backbone of the wonderful relic had been lengthened to the requirements of the story with vertebræ which could not have pertained to the big fish during its life.

Our ancestors' barbarism in serving oysters with sugar and honey was due to the influence of the Romans, who were guilty of the same outrage against decency. By the way, the Romans have gained far too much credit for gastronomic discernment from their readiness to buy British oysters at a hundred sesterces per basket, a price that by comparison makes our best natives, at three shillings a dozen,

things of canine cheapness. The Roman pontiffs, like reverend gourmands of more recent periods, delighted in eating money, and would have cared less for British oysters if they could have bought them for a trifle. Epicures who improved our “natives” by coating them with honey, and keeping them until they were putrid, cannot have relished, or even had a sense for, the delicate characteristics of the fish. Not that all the gourmands took their oysters, sweet or rotten. But these tastes of a few morbid epicures rouse a suspicion that the one fault of the oyster’s flavour was generally mistaken by the old Romans for its distinguishing merit. None of their several modes of cooking the oyster were intelligent. Nor is there much to admire in Apicius’s simple and rather clumsy method of preserving the fish, although the process is chiefly accountable for his gastronomic fame. He merely washed his oysters in vinegar, and packed them in vessels dressed with pitch. Thus prepared and packed for the voyage from Britain to Rome, and for transmission from Rome to the country-houses of her gourmets, our “natives” were strongly redolent of pitch and something worse before they came to table.

The ancients, however, did well in using raw oysters as a pre-prandial whet. They were eaten for this purpose at Athens and Rome. There is no

evidence that the English mediævalists followed so good an example, though the learned author of the “*Tabella Cibaria*” went too far when he accused them of neglecting their fat and juicy “natives.” There was never a time when our epicures disdained to cultivate, or at least to plunder, the oyster-bed, and Elizabethan literature abounds with evidence of the high esteem for oysters in Shakespeare’s London. In his notes on the English capital, Paul Hentzner says, “The *best* oysters are sold here in great quantities.” Gastronomers had already forbidden the consumption of oysters in the hot months whose names contain no letter R. After noticing the varieties of fish caught in the Thames—which in his days afforded barbels, trout, chevin, perch, smelts, bream, roach, dace, gudgeon, flounders, shrimps, and carp, as well as salmon—Harrison observes, “Albeit our oisters are generallie forborne in the foure hot moneths of the yeare, that is to saie, Maie, June, Julie, and August, which are void of the letter R; yet in some places they be continuallie eaten, where they be kept in pits, as I have knownen by experience.”

Oysters were neglected in these months not only for their want of flavour and condition, but also because they were thought provocative in hot weather of the same immoralities as in France are attributed to excessive indulgence in mackerel. In

his “Dyet’s Dry Humour,” Buttes notices this ill effect of oysters in the hot season. It is strange how divers kinds of fish—albeit commended by the Church as food fit for religious seasons—have been accused of stimulating vicious appetites and encouraging evil propensities. Salmon had formerly an evil fame for disposing its eaters to drunkenness, whilst giving them dyspepsia.

Remarking on the old ordinance against oysters, Grimod de la Reynière insisted that, out of regard to their defective condition, they should be excluded from the epicurean table from the beginning of May till the beginning of December. “Nous ne conseillerons à personne d’en manger en Septembre ; elles n’y sont ni assez fraiches ni assez grasses pour piquer la sensualité d’un gourmand. Ce n’est guère qu’au commencement de Décembre qu’elles sont vraiment dignes de figurer sur sa table.”

But whilst forbidding oysters in August, social sentiment declares with singular inconsistency that they come into season on the fifth day of that month, *i.e.*, on St. James’s Day (old style), when the priests of Catholic England blessed the apple-trees, and commended their fruit to the saint’s protection, in the terms of a formal prayer and benediction preserved in the Sarum Manual. The patron-saint of apple-trees in our Catholic time,

St. James also became in a comically irregular way the patron-saint of our oyster-beds.

No pilgrim visited the shrine of St. James at Compostella without taking away with him a hallowed scallop-shell. The fish, abounding in the adjacent sea, was the saint's special care; its shell was the emblem of service at his altar. Throughout Christendom, wherever a mess of scallops were served to a pious traveller, the saint was thanked for the wholesome food. By the pilgrim who had earned the right to bear one, the sanctified scallop was an amulet against evil spirits, a memorial of pious adventure, and a badge of honour. It was also the cup from which he drank at the way-side spring, and the spoon with which he took his share of pot-luck at the Pilgrim's Inn. To his dying day he often used it as his spoon and cup. Erasmus in the "Pilgrimages" was jocose about the scallop-shells brought to England from Compostella. But the pilgrim, who knew little of the scholar and less of his writings, continued to be known

*coct.
(Habib u.6)*

"By his scallop shell and hat,
And by his sandal shoon."

And on the return of St. James's Day the saint's devotees raised at street-corners, in his honour, mimic temples that were constructed of scallop-

shells. A candle having been placed in one of these scallop-shell "grottoes," way-farers were solicited for pence to defray the cost of the emblematical taper. "Please, Sir, think of the grotto, and give the good saint a candle." The earlier grottoes were made altogether of scallop-shells. But either for want of a sufficient supply of the proper material, or because the smaller shells besides being plentiful, could be used effectively in the details of a grotto, builders in course of time combined scallop-shells and oyster-shells in the toy-edifices. The two kinds of shells having been thus brought together, the one soon imparted its sacredness to the other ; and the Reformation having put a stop to the Compostella pilgrimages and the influx of hallowed shells of the larger kind, St. James's grottoes were ere long built altogether with oyster-shells. Henceforth the populace regarded oysters as enjoying the saint's special care, and to justify the architectural use of new *shells* on the saint's day, discovered that oysters came, in a certain sense, into season some four weeks before they were good for eating. The fish might be poor fare, but the shells were wanted for grottoes in the first week of August. When it had thus become the fashion to open oysters for the sake of their shells in an anciently prohibited season, social sentiment speedily discovered a reason for eating the oysters. "Whoever eats oysters on

St. James's Day will never want money," runs the proverb, which the grotto-makers invented to discredit their antagonists, who declared it wrong to open oysters in a month without an R. During a considerable portion of our quite recent history we had laws forbidding oysters to be eaten before the 25th of July, new St. James's Day. But these laws, whether originating in Acts of Parliament, or in conventions sanctioned by the legislature, have been abolished; and at present oysters may be lawfully taken and sold the whole year round.

Authorities differ as to the right number of oysters for a pre-prandial whet. Six oysters are enough to rouse the appetite of ordinary feeders; but gourmands have been known to prelude a heavy dinner with many dozens. Baron Graham, the placid judge of whom Jekyll said "No one but his sempstress could ruffle him," on learning the special virtue of uncooked "natives," inquired how many he should take for an appetite. "Eat away at them till you are hungry," was the reply. The Barón, who could never see a joke or a barrister's argument, acted on his instructions. After disposing of ten dozen, he remarked with mild plaintiveness to an observer of his proceedings. "Something must be wrong in me, I have eaten one hundred and twenty oysters, and 'pon my

honour, I don't think I am quite as hungry as when I began."

Brillat-Savarin's preprandial whet seldom exceeded three or four dozen oysters ; but when he entertained the Sieur Laperte at a *tête-à-tête* dinner, he ate a thirteenth dozen in deference to his guest's special gastronomic passion. Laperte, who had vowed to eat his *soul* of oysters, disposed of thirty-two dozen without fully accomplishing his purpose, and then turned his attention to dinner with powers neither weakened nor embarrassed by the prelude. "Nous dînames," says Brillat-Savarin of his friend's demeanour after the oysters, "et il se comporta avec la vigueur et la tenue d'un homme qui aurait été à jeun." The reader needs no reminder of the Vicomte de Vieil-Castel's whet of twenty-four dozen "d'huîtres d'Ostende.". It was over the grave of such an one that a friendly hand put this inscription.

"Tom, whom to-day no noise stirs,
Lies buried in these cloisters ;
If, at the last trump,
He does not quickly jump,
Only cry 'Oysters.'

Though he relished oyster-sauce, and commended oysters as a flavouring ingredient of beef-steak pudding, Dr. Kitchiner resembled most epicures of his time in valuing the "native" chiefly for its

power to revive a jaded appetite, when taken in the freshness of life before the advent of soup. "Those," he observes, "who wish to enjoy this delicious restorative in its utmost perfection, must eat it the moment it is opened, with its own gravy in the under shell; if not eaten *while absolutely alive*, its flavour and spirit are lost! The true lover of an oyster will have some regard for the feelings of his little favourite, and will never abandon it to the mercy of a bungling operator." It is still the custom of Lincoln's Inn Hall in the terms when oysters are seasonable, to place a barrel of natives on the bar table, some twenty minutes before the dinner-hour on a certain day of each week. Any barrister of the Inn may help himself to oysters from the barrel, but he must open them himself, a limitation of his privilege that determines many a young lawyer to leave the barrel alone. Oysters are delicious and their shells are useful; but nothing can be said in behalf of such a compound of fish and grit as a bungling operator at the Lincoln's Inn table often puts between his teeth.

"What capital things oysters would be," said the wit, "if we could only feed our servants on the shells." Some fifteen years since, Mr. Frank Buckland observed enthusiastically at a club-dinner "May I live to bring the oyster to every poor

man's door!" "The shells are there already," rejoined a friend, duly mindful of Mr. Samuel Weller's philosophical speculations on the mysterious affinity of poverty and oyster shells.] Alas, *Picks & Licks* the oyster, of any kind, is further than ever from the poor man's table, and the native is fast becoming the luxury of none but millionaires. When it has passed beyond the reach of the moderately prosperous, it will be more than ever delicious to those of the plutocrats whose selfish pleasures are heightened by the consideration of misery, just as the saints of heaven were said by the gentlest of Anglican prelates to feel their felicity most vividly when reminded of the tortures of hell. "I should enjoy my expensive dinners much more," said an unamiable epicure, "if I did not know that a poor man may dine fairly well for a trifle, and that hunger can make almost any meal palatable."

In ancient times, potentates were quick to claim for their own plates whatever was best of the creatures provided for man's use. The sturgeon owes its royal rank to this royal selfishness. Gatis of Syria forbade her subjects to buy sturgeon, or any other prime fish, until she had exercised, or declined to exercise, her right of pre-emption. In England the sturgeon has been styled royal ever since Henry the First reserved it for his special board, as a creature too superb for the feasts of vassals. The

old kings of France were also of opinion that Providence designed the grandest of eatable fishes for regal feeders. The Parisian *poissardes* used to present their monarch with a sturgeon every year, and portraits of the sturgeons thus put upon his table were preserved in the archives of the state. Changing its style with the times, the sturgeon became Imperial under the first Napoleon, and often appeared at the banquets of the Imperial arch-chancellor. It once happened that Cambacérès received on the morning of a grand dinner two prodigious sturgeons, one weighing 162 livres, the other 187 livres. Ever frugal and ostentatious in his hospitalities, the great epicure contrived that both fish should be *shown*, but only one eaten at the feast. The smaller sturgeon, dished as though it were cooked, was first borne towards the table by four valets, preceded by a single flutist and two violinists, playing a suitable air. Each of the valets bore in one hand a flaming torch, whilst his other hand supported the dish. A Swiss, with halberd in hand, led the procession. To the delight of the company, the enormous fish was conveyed thus pompously to the top of the table, when to their dismay it slipped from the dish to the floor. Obeying instructions, one of the four liveried bearers had made a false step. In a trice the fish was taken from the ground, and carried away as unfit for the table, whilst the

guests deplored the accident. An interval of two minutes, and the larger sturgeon was brought in with a concert of flutes and violins. *Two* flutes and *four* violins proclaimed its superiority to the fish which had been attended by only three musicians. In all other respects, the second procession resembled the first. Another version of the same incident is given in "The Art of Dining," by Mr. Hayward, Q.C., who substitutes two huge turbots for the two prodigious sturgeons, and makes Cardinal Fesch officiate as host instead of the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès. It is enough to allude to Domitian's monstrous turbot, celebrated in Juvenal's fourth satire.

Worshipped in ancient days by the Egyptians, the eel is honoured abundantly by modern epicures. By the way, it is strange how few cooks and fishermen are aware that to reduce the writhing creature to passive stillness it is only necessary to cut off the tip of the tail. Remove ever so small a piece of the tail, and a child may be trusted to handle it. Stricken with paralysis, it is heedless of music, which is said to be so powerful over its species, that eels may be lured to nets by the melodies of fishermen. The Scottish harper who "harp'd a fish out o' the sa't water" performed no great marvel, if we may credit all the stories of carp and chad drawn to destruction by the music of bells and castanets.

There is no recorded case of a fish voluntarily offering itself to the carver's knife on the ringing of the second dinner-bell ; but at Rotterdam and other places tame carp are quick in answering their keeper's call when he summons them to a meal. In some parts of Germany it is the custom to fit nets with little rows of bells, whose chiming is believed to attract certain kinds of fish.

The perch does not care much for music, though he will respond to raps on the side of his tank ; but Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell, a capital writer about fish, asserts on good grounds that, however insensible to harmony, a perch may be charmed by its own eye. On removing a hook from the jaws of a greedy little perch, he saw one of the creature's eyes adhering to the metal. The fish, too small for the pot, having been restored to its native water, Lake Windermere, Mr. Pennell baited his hook with the eye so unfortunately torn from the fish. The pain of the accident must have been trivial, for scarcely three minutes had passed since it was thrown back into the water, when the maimed perch again gorged the hook baited with the eye. Was the creature fascinated by its own eye ? or was it animated by a reasonable desire to recover a property of which it had been unjustly deprived.

Mr. Hayward, no mean authority, asserts that, though pond carp acquire a muddy taste, a fat

river carp is a dish for a prince. M. Verdelet de Bourbonne was so fond of carps' tongues that he once bought three thousand carps, whose tongues were extracted and cooked into a single dish. The carp, "bedroped with gold" (Pope), has carried off more than his due share of authors' flattery. The John Dorée, beloved by Quin, is another fish which has been commended extravagantly. Even its external disfigurements have been accounted virtues. Like the haddock, despised by Poodle Byng, it is said to bear the marks of St. Peter's fingers. As for the John's "wrinkled and depressed shape," it was other and lovelier before St. Christopher put a heavy foot upon it. The whiting has been praised more discreetly, and justifies the eulogies of its admirers. Mr. Disraeli, whose novels contain many excellent remarks on cookery, calls it "the chicken of the deep." Red mullet is so perfect in itself that it can scarcely have been improved by the sauce which Ude invented for its benefit. "He refuses to pay sixpence for my sauce!" the indignant cook exclaimed, when an economical member of Crockford's had struck the item from his bill. "Does he imagine that red mullets come out of the sea with my sauce in their pockets?" However objectionable as a needless interference with a natural flavour, Ude's sauce for red mullet was superior to the Spanish sauce which James the Second magnified as

the *one* proper relish for flesh, fowl, and fish. “He did mightily magnify his sauce,” Pepys says of the Duke of York (1668-9), “which he did then eat with everything, and said it was the best universal sauce in the world, it being taught him by the Spanish Ambassador, made of some parsley and dry toast, beat in a mortar, together with vinegar, salt, and a little pepper!” Giles Rose had reason to think meanly of the Duke’s gastronomic perception. The man who could admire such a sauce deserved to lose his three kingdoms.

Whether “fresh drawen frae the Forth” or newly caught in Yarmouth waters, “caller herring,” those “lives o’ men,” as the ballad called them with fine pathos, are “bonny fish and dainty faring.” Like potatoes, they must be taken from the fire as soon as they are “done.” Dished at the happy moment, and served in season with plain melted butter, they are always acceptable to the epicure, who can appreciate what is good although it is cheap. Salted herrings, when cured delicately, are no mean food. One of the *seasonable* dishes for Easter at the old English table was “a red herring riding away on horseback, i.e., a herring ordered by the cook, something after the likeness of a man on horseback, in a corn-sallad.” Best at breakfast, the bloater is not out of place at other meals. Seventy years since it was commonly served with

the cheese in the after-course of grand dinners, as a dainty that cleared the palate and revived it for the enjoyment of port wine. Ay, more, the three-bottle men of the Regency would sometimes pause at the “finish” of the second bottle, and prepare for the third by eating a large-roed bloater. And in doing so, our grandfathers were only following the example of the Elizabethan topers, who honoured the red-herring as a whet for drinking. It has been already observed that the Elizabethans also used salt bacon for the same purpose, a practice usual in France during the sixteenth century. “Give,” says Rabelais in “*Gargantua*,” “a synonymon for a gammon of bacen. It is the compulsory of drinkers ; it is a pully. By a pully-rope wine is let down into the cellar, and by a gammon into the stomach.” In their note on this passage Urquhart and Motteux remark, “Thus we say, a red-herring is a shoeing-horn to a pot of ale.”

Honourable for its gastronomic services, the bloater is even more respectable as one of the sources of our national prosperity. Cheap food for the million, as well as choice fare for the children of luxury, herrings have for centuries enlarged our wealth and helped to sustain our commercial credit. Affording employment to thousands of simple fishermen, our herring fisheries preserve several of our maritime towns from decay, whilst maintaining the

best nurseries of our navy and “mercantile marine.” “I am a good Protestant and abhor the Pope; but when there shall be no Catholics, *what* shall we do with our herrings?” exclaimed a member of the House of Commons with natural alarm and fervour, on being assured that Pius the Sixth’s expulsion from Rome would be soon followed by the extinction of the Catholic Church and faith. The House fell into long and riotous laughter, in which the orator refused to join. A Norfolk squire, who owned houses in Yarmouth and half-a-dozen villages on the eastern coast, he trembled for the “interest” that, flourishing on the errors of the Papacy, enabled him to keep fox-hounds in his native county. The “upper ten” of Yarmouth have been facetiously termed “the bloater aristocracy.” May they long continue to justify the pungent description.

To pass from herrings to whitebait, the fish which Alexandre Dumas once ate at “Grennisch.” Naturalists have at length decided that instead of being a distinct species, whitebait are the young fish of half-a-score different kinds of fish. But no one can say when the taste for “bait” first began to show itself in the gourmands of our capital. The Ministerial Whitebait dinner, an institution destroyed by Mr. Gladstone and restored by Mr. Disraeli, had its origin in the snug fish-dinners which Sir Robert Preston used to give to Pitt and Old George Rose,

first at his Dagenham Reach Cottage, and then at a Greenwich tavern. But there is no evidence that whitebait was ever served at the earlier—ay, or the later—fish-feeds of these three Elders of the Trinity House. The “Austerlitz look” may have covered the great statesman’s countenance ere the first bait was cased with batter. One is reluctant to think that the Premier who instituted the ministerial banquet never tasted the dainty dish which for several decades has been the chief delicacy of the repast. But in the absence of any menu or note to settle the question, it must remain doubtful whether whitebait was known to the minister who originated the cabinet fish-dinners. It is certain that whitebait was not largely eaten by our epicures in Pitt’s time. Kitchiner’s silence respecting the fish is conclusive on this point. The author of “The Cook’s Oracle,” who died in 1827, would not have failed to notice the bait, had it been in great demand when he published his book, or at any date of his period.

Always ready to decry English cooks and cookery, Alexandre Dumas insists that, instead of being a peculiarly British delicacy, our whitebait is identical with the Italian *yanchette*, the *poutin* of Nice, and the *poisson blanc* of Bordeaux. If he is right in this matter, the people of Nice and Bordeaux should be thankful for their good fortune. But whitebait is one of the few culinary facts not understood in

France. It is also a fact on which no Frenchman is competent to form an opinion. When he talks about "bait," M. Taine is as irrational as Alexandre Dumas.

Wherever caught, whitebait are worthless unless skilfully cooked. No other kind of fish needs so much care, knowledge, and dexterity in the preparer. The modern Amphitryon, who has no *artiste* specially trained to cook "bait," should never put them on his table. "Sent in" from the kitchen of even an able pastry-cook, whitebait are always defective in crispness or internal juice, a short journey being enough to injure them when cooked. Prepared by a cook without the requisite special experience, they are always disappointing, if not absolutely abominable. Messed up by an inept hand in the general frying-pan, they sometimes result in a stuff that looks like a mixture of burnt peas and soot. "My dear Sir, you are passing the whitebait," a host once observed to a candid friend. "Indeed," was the rejoinder, "I never before heard you call black white." The free speaker was never again asked to take "bait" of any kind at the table for which these dusky whitebait were provided.

CHAPTER II.

JOINTS AND STEAKS.

"A sirloyne of beef was set before him, (so knighted saith tradition, by this King Henry), on which the king laid lustily."—FULLER'S "CHURCH HISTORY."

"Our Second Charles of fame facet
On loin of beef did dine;
He held his sword, pleas'd, o'er the meat,
Arise thou fam'd Sir Loin."

THE "NEW SIR JOHN BARLEYCORN."

"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly."

MACBETH.

"Le véritable bifteck, comme il se fait en Angleterre."—"L'ART DU CUISINIER."

"Nous faisons notre bifteck avec un morceau de filet d'aloyau, tandis que nos voisins prennent, pour leurs biftecks, ce que nous appelons la sour-noix du bœuf, c'est-à-dire le rump-steak."—"DICTIONNAIRE DE CUISINE."

LONG after they had emerged from what Mr. Richard Swiveller would call their "native pot," joints were served at the English table with sauces that would now be thought inappropriate to their flavours. In the seventeenth century our ancestors dressed boiled chickens with verjuice (of crabs or sour grapes), and took mustard with mutton. Seasoning roast beef with pepper, ginger, and

verjuice, as well as mustard, they disguised lamb with mustard and sugar, in default of mint sauce —a modern invention.

The loin of beef was highly esteemed by the Elizabethan epicures, and there are apocryphal stories of loins that figured with stately massiveness at banquets given in the days of the earlier Tudors.

In his "Church History," Fuller tells how Henry the Eighth, disguised as a gentleman of the Royal Guard, seated himself at the Abbot of Reading's dinner-table, and ate so largely of a noble loin that the abbot declared he would give willingly a hundred pounds to have his guest's appetite and egregious power of eating. A few weeks later the Abbot was seized, brought to London, and thrown into the Tower, where he was kept for several days on bread and water. When this diet had made him vehemently desirous of better fare, a roast sirloin was set before the prisoner, who forthwith fed off it with equal gust and greediness. Surprised by the timely arrival of the meat, the Abbot was less agreeably astonished, at the close of his long meal, by the appearance of the same portly beef-eater who had visited Reading Abbey. "Sir Abbot, I have cured you of your want of appetite, and claim my fee," cried the stalwart gentleman. On learning that his physician was also his sovereign, the Abbot lost no time in promising to pay the money, and

craving pardon for the freedom of his speech about His Highness's gluttony.

According to a tradition noticed in Fuller's version of this story, the loin of beef acquired its knightly style from Henry the Eighth, who, in delight at a magnificent piece of the overloin, laid his sword instead of a carving-knife upon its steaming surface. Later sovereigns have been credited with the same act. In the middle of the seventeenth century James the First was often mentioned as the humorous king who dubbed the piece of meat; and in ignorance of Henry's title to figure in history as the giver of the honour, Richardson says authoritatively in his dictionary, "Surloin or sirloin, the loin of beef so entitled by King James the First." The second Charles, however, is the sovereign to whose social fame this anecdote has clung most tenaciously. Again and again, by gossip-mongers and grave historians, has it been told how the Merry Monarch convulsed a knot of courtiers with merriment by knighting a loin of beef; and only a few years since a painter of considerable ability exhibited on one of the Royal Academy's walls a picture of Charles the Second in the act of conferring the distinction on the fortunate joint.

The explanation of the word having been indicated, it is needless to observe that the "sir" of the

sirloin is nothing but the prefix accorded to half a hundred familiar words of our language. Surprise, surmount, surplus, surplice, surname, survival, are instances of this common use of a prefix which was often spelt with *i* instead of *u* in the days of loose orthography. In the old cookery books "sirloin" is spelt in the one as often as in the other way. The same was the case in the general literature of the last century; and although it is now-a-days seldom written "surloin," the word so spelt appears in our best dictionaries. Webster and Richardson give both spellings. Johnson, strangely, makes no mention of sirloin or surloin; but, in connection with the foregoing remarks on the twofold orthography of the prefix, readers should observe that he occasionally spells it with "u" in words where that spelling is at present obsolete, if not inadmissible. For instance, he allows us to write either "surname" or "sirname." The latter mode of spelling the additional name may of course be defended on the ground that a patronymic is a *sire-name*.

Though it was no feature of the earlier Old English cuisine, and is therefore much less ancient than the idolater of roast beef would like us to think it, the sirloin is a joint of respectable antiquity. Seen occasionally on the Tudor tables, it appeared at least once a fortnight on the board of every wealthy Londoner of Charles the Second's time.

The “piece of roast beef” which Misson mentions amongst the ten or twelve sorts of common meat which infallibly take their turns at the table of the middling sort of people, was usually taken from the loin of the ox. The sirloin was also a joint for highly fashionable banquets at any time subsequent to the first Charles’s accession. It figures in Robert May’s menu for Christmas day, which runs thus :—

“Oysters at the entry.

“*First Course.*—1. Collar of brawn. 2. Stewed broth of mutton and marrow-bones. 3. A grand sallet. 4. A pottage of caponets. 5. A breast of veal in stoffado. 6. Boiled partridges. 7. Chine of beef, or *surloin roast*. 8. Minced pies. 9. A jegote of mutton with anchovy sauce. 10. A made dish of sweetbreads. 11. A roast swan. 12. A pasty of venison. 13. A kid with a pudding in his belly. 14. A steak-pie. 15. A haunch of venison roasted. 16. A turkey roast and stuck with cloves. 17. A made dish of chickens in puff paste. 18. Two bran geese roasted. 19. Two large capons, one larded. 20. A custard.

“Oranges and lemons.

“*Second Course.*—1. A young lamb or kid. 2. Two couple of rabbits, two larded. 3. Soust pig with tongues. 4. Three ducks, one larded. 5. Three pheasants, one larded. 6. A swan pye. 7. Three brace of

partridges, three larded. 8. Made dish in puff paste. 9. Bolonia sausages and anchovies, and mushrooms, and caviare, and pickled oysters in a dish. 10. Six teels, three larded. 11. A gammon of Westphalia bacon. 12. Ten plovers, five larded. 13. Quince pie, or warden pie. 14. Six woodcocks, three larded. 15. A standing tart in puff paste, preserved fruits, and pippins. 16. A dish of larks. 17. Six dried neats' tongues. 18. Sturgeon. 19. Powdered geese. 20. Jellies."

Plum-pudding is here conspicuous by its absence, a fact which at least shows that the rich compound was no such prime article of Christmas fare in the middle of the seventeenth century as it became in Georgian England, and still is. The pudding that invariably preceded, or followed, roast beef at a "family dinner" in William the Third's time was a plum-pudding. Misson describes it as consisting of "flower, milk, eggs, butter, sugar, suet, marrow, raisins, &c.," and says it was either baked in an oven, or boiled *with* the meat. The Londoners of Misson's day were enthusiastic admirers of this preparation. "It is a manna," says the French refugee, "that hits the palates of all sorts of peoples, a manna better than that of the wilderness, because the people never weary of it. Ah, what an excellent thing is an English pudding! To come in pudding-time is as much as to say to come in the most lucky

moment in the world." In their enthusiasm for the familiar food, Misson's friends used to exclaim fervently, "Blessed be he that invented pudding!" Perhaps Misson was the authority on whom Alexandre Dumas relied when he wrote seriously in the "Dictionnaire de Cuisine." "Plum-pudding—Mets farineux sans lequel il n'y a pas de bon repas en Angleterre." But the pudding celebrated by Misson was no peculiar feature of Christmas cheer. Always popular, it was not in especial demand at that season. Elsewhere in this work it has been remarked that the germs of the modern plum-pudding may be found in the mediæval cuisine, and that plum-porridge maintained its old place on the festal board almost to the close of the last century.

Accounted the chief of joints by our Carolinian gourmands, the sirloin was glorified by our Augustan poets. King proclaimed its dignity, and Fenton extolled it as the fittest fare for "bold Britons." Harping on the old fiction of its knightly worth, the author of the "Art of Cookery" says:—

"When pleasures to the eye and palate meet,
The cook has rendered his great work complete;
His glory far, like Sir-Loin's knighthood flies,
Immortal made as Kit-Cat by his pies."

Unaware that the victors of Cressy were habitual consumers of pottage and gallimawfries, Fenton

says in his prologue to Southerne's "Spartan Dame":—

"But the bold Briton ne'er in earnest dines,
Without substantial haunches and surloins,
In wit, as well as war, they give us vigour;
Cressy was lost by kickshaws and soup-meagre."

Greater poets than Fenton and King enlarged the literature of gastronomy in the eighteenth century. Swift sang the leg of mutton, Gay the knuckle of veal, and Goldsmith the haunch of venison. Exhibiting at the same time his delight in good cheer and fine perception of character, Goldsmith also opened the "Retaliation" with the familiar lines :—

"Of old, when Scarron his companions invited,
Each guest brought his dish, and the feast was united.
If our landlord supplies us with beef and with fish,
Let each guest bring himself, and he brings the best dish;
Our Dean shall be venison, just fresh from the plains;
Our Burke shall be tongue, with a garnish of brains;
Our Will shall be wild fowl, of excellent flavour,
And Dick with his pepper shall heighten the savour;
Our Cumberland's sweet-bread its place shall obtain,
And Douglas is pudding substantial and plain;
Our Garrick's a salad, for in him we see
Oil, vinegar, sugar, and saltiness agree:
To make out the dinner, full certain I am
That Ridge is anchovy, and Reynolds is lamb;
That Hickey's a capon, and by the same rule,
Magnanimous Goldsmith a gooseberry fool."

With the aid of a muse, alike clever at turning

couplet and spit, Gay taught cooks how to stew a knuckle of veal in this fashion :—

“ Take a knuckle of veal,
You may buy it or steal;
In a few pieces cut it,
In a stewing pan put it;
Salt, pepper, and mace,
Must season this knuckle;
Then what’s joined to a place (*i.e.* celery, *vulgo* salary,)
With other herbs muckle;
That which kill’d King Will (*i.e.* sorrel),
And what never stands still (*i.e.* thyme),
Some sprigs from that bed
Where children are bred, (*i.e.* parsley),
Which much will mend, if
Both spinach and endive,
And lettuce and beet
With marygold meet.
Put no water at all,
For it maketh things small,
Which lest it should happen,
A close cover clap on;
Put this pot of wood metal (*i.e.* copper),
In a boiling hot kettle,
And there let it be

(Mark the doctrine I teach)
About, let me see,
Thrice as long as you preach.
So skimming the fat off,
Say grace with your hat off,
Oh ! then with what rapture
Will it fill Dean and Chapter !”

The Dean, for whose amusement and serious

edification Gay threw off this trifle, commended roast mutton in the following strain :—

“ Gently stir and blow the fire,
Lay the mutton down to roast,
Dress it quickly, I desire,
In the dripping put a toast,
That I hunger may remove,—
Mutton is the meat I love.

“ On the dresser see it lie,
Oh ! the charming white and red,
Finer never met the eye,
On the sweetest grass it fed ;
Let the jack go swiftly round,
Let me have it nicely brown'd.

“ On the table spread the cloth,
Let the knives be sharp and clean,
Pickles get and salad both,
Let them each be fresh and green.
With small beer, good ale, and wine,
O ye gods ! how I shall dine !”

The sirloin had attained universal popularity long before our ancestors turned their attention to steaks. The fork had for many years promoted the taste for natural and simple flavours, when epicures discovered that the distinctive sapidity of beef should be sought in thick, lightly broiled slices taken from the juiciest and tenderest parts of the carcase. The precise date of this discovery is unknown ; but it may be assigned to the close of the seventeenth century. Anyhow, steaks were so highly esteemed,

and their eaters so numerous in the days of Queen Anne, that gastronomic connoisseurs formed themselves into clubs that, whilst furthering the inferior ends of good fellowship, had for their chief object the study of beef under the most favourable circumstances. Addison refers to one of these associations in a "Spectator." Samuel Johnson, who belonged to a beef-club in Ivy Lane, lived in times when his countrymen were scarcely more proud of their liberties than of their steaks. Of late years we have grown indifferent to the food which our great grandfathers extolled so passionately. One now-a-days seldom encounters the steak in private houses, or hears its praises in the few taverns which still offer it to their customers. But if we have outgrown our old love of steaks at home, we are still chiefly known to continental gourmands as the inventors and worshippers of the broiled cut. The typical Englishman, who may still be found on the stages of Parisian theatres with a boole-dogue at his heels, may forget to order "ros-bif," but he always takes occasion to declare his loyalty to "bif-teck."

Of all the beef clubs that sprung into existence in the United Kingdom during the last century, none is more famous than the "The Sublime Society of Beef Steaks" which, alike fortunate at its birth and death, was founded by a genial harlequin, and was committed to the grave by an affectionate historian.

Established in 1735, under the roof of Covent Garden Theatre by Henry Rich, whose room had long been the favourite resort of wits and their patrons, the Sublime Society was famous in its infancy. Ay, it was born with historic honours on its head, for memories of Rich's hospitality, and of "good things" uttered at the harlequin's board before the actual enrolment of the brotherhood, were a bright portion of its earlier celebrity. Consisting of only twenty-four members, each of whom might bring a guest on "open days," it had a nicely adjusted constitution, and a staff of officers invested with adequate authority. The "President of the Day" could enforce his orders with the convenient terrors of unwritten and elastic law. There was "the Bishop" to administer the oath to newly elected brothers, and "the Recorder" to preside at the frequent trials, that always closed with a verdict of guilty against beef-eaters accused of criminal propensities. "The Boots," who was every man's butt and butler, was liable to lose anything but his place if he ventured to dally with his beloved viand, when bidden to fetch another bottle from the cellar. The society had of course a badge, a motto, and a uniform. The badge was a gridiron, the motto "Beef and Liberty," the uniform blue coat and buff waistcoat, adorned with brass buttons, bearing the club's gridiron and legend. The club had

also a finger-ring in which was set a gridiron encircled by the club motto. In the earlier days of the Sublime Society, no "Beef Steak" ever appeared in his place at dinner without having the club ring on one of his fingers.

One has only to survey the roll of members to imagine the wit and gaiety of the society's sublimest meetings. Churchill, Dennis Delane, Hogarth, Gabriel Hunt, Dean Price, Judge Welsh, Hippisley, Dr. Anthony Askew, and Theophilus Cibber were some of the brothers who strolled on Saturdays to Covent Garden, in the days when "The Steaks" dined at two o'clock in the old quarters of the harlequin and his friend, the scene-painter, Lambert. Paul Whitehead and Henry Gifford, Dr. Barrowby and Dr. Askew, were amongst the men who may be called the second generation of the Sublime Steaks. At a later date the Prince of Wales and his brothers of York and Sussex proved themselves sincere admirers of the steaming steak, and ate it in company with earls and actors, wits and journalists. The society was jubilant and slightly insolent on drawing within its circle the heir to the throne; but it had more reason to exult over the election of another member, who joined the club three months earlier. Charles Morris, the anacreontic songster, who was perpetually "filling his glass again" from youth to old

age, did more than all the Princes and Peers for the renown of the Steaks. "He was," as Mr. Arnold gratefully observes, "the life and soul of the society." Most of his best songs were sung for the first time at the sublime board, and in days when no man about town liked to confess that he had never heard Captain Morris glorify drunkenness with music and poetry, the Bard of the Beef Steak Club was one of its chief attractions to gentlemen who had no predilection for under-done meat. Anyhow, the Prince of Wales and Captain Morris between them raised the society to the sublimest height of fashion. Henry Brougham was a Beef Steak, whilst he led the Bar and fought his way to honour in the Commons; and he still wore the blue coat and gridiron buttons when he was called to keep the King's conscience. Lord Grantley, Sir Matthew Wood, the Earl of Suffolk, the Duke of Leinster, Cam Hobhouse (Lord Broughton), Sir Francis Burdett, and Dr. Somerville were contemporary Beef Steaks, who used to applaud the brilliant lawyer's special song, "La Pipe de Tabac."

The Beef Steaks at table were so free and frank in their jocular speech, that sensitive members could not always keep their good humour under the hilarious assaults on their self-love. It was a first rule of the society that any member might say what he pleased to another, and that no one was to take

offence at the utterance. But the rule was more easily made than observed. More than a few brothers retired before Brother Stephenson's unscrupulous raillery, and withdrew for ever from a fraternity whose humour involved incessant inflictions of pain. Even the amiable Duke of Sussex nearly broke with the club in his pardonable annoyance at being found guilty (by a Beef Steak jury) of a disgraceful offence. His Royal Highness was walking to "the Steaks" with Brother Hallet, when the latter was relieved of his watch-chain and seals by a street-thief. After dinner the Steaks accused the Prince of being the robber, tried him with due attention to forms, ascertained his guilt, and sentenced him to wear the white sheet and receive a reprimand from the Recorder. The criminal, whose wine and beef had disagreed with him, went through the punishment with a bad grace, and turned sulky. The renewed laughter of Steaks only aggravated his displeasure, and, calling for his carriage at an early hour, he drove off in high dudgeon. On the following morning Mr. Arnold (the historian's father) waited on His Royal Highness in order to assuage the royal anger, and assure him that, in spite of their careful consideration of the damning evidence, the Steaks held him incapable of stealing a friend's portable property. But before the ambassador could say a word to the purpose,

the good-natured Duke exclaimed, “I know what you are come about. I made a fool of myself last night. You were quite right, and I quite wrong; so I shall come next Saturday and do penance again for my bad temper.” The last of the royal brothers to withdraw from the Steaks, the Duke of Sussex, was a member of the Sublime Society so late as 1839.

Between this duke’s election and retirement, the club changed its quarters several times. On the destruction (by fire) of its first home, it fed for a few months at the Bedford Coffee House, and then moved to the old Lyceum Theatre in 1809, where it remained till 1830, when it was again “burnt out.” Its next home was the Lyceum Tavern, Strand, whence it re-migrated to its old lodging in the Bedford Coffee House, where it tarried till 1838, when its last and stateliest residence was built under the roof of the New Lyceum. Twenty-nine years of existence still remained for the Sublime Society; but they were years of languor and decay. The original gridiron, dug out from the ruins of old Covent Garden, was fixed in the ceiling of the new dining-room, but no one could restore the old spirit of the Society, that never recovered from its loss of Henry Brougham, who withdrew from the club in 1835. Celebrity after celebrity followed Brougham’s significant ex-

ample, and though the vacancies were filled up by men of parts and distinction, no new member brought the spirits that could re-animate the failing body.

Steps were taken for its revival; but whilst some of these measures were injudicious, others were only adopted when the patient's case was beyond remedy. It was well to change the day of meeting, but inauspicious Friday was an unfortunate choice of the day for future meetings. To accommodate itself to new fashions, the club postponed its dinner hour from six to seven, and from seven to eight o'clock. In old times the dinner hour (originally two o'clock) had been deferred successively to four, five, and six. The reluctant concession of sherry to members, whose gout forbade them to drink port, was not enough to conciliate failing valetudinarians who were under orders to take nothing but claret.

Noticing several of the causes of its decadence, Mr. Arnold failed to detect the source of the worst troubles under which the Society groaned in its later years. The fact is, the club was slowly dying of dignity. Dukes and Earls lay heavy upon it, great men who seldom appeared at the board, though they continued to pay their annual "subscriptions" and "whips" under a notion that they were doing the moribund brotherhood a service

by “holding on” to the exclusion of younger “blood.” Familiarity with Princes had made the senile club disdainful of clever “nobodies;” and preferring great men who had once been brilliant to brilliant men who were only making the first steps to greatness, the Society elected to its vacancies eminent persons out of regard for their names rather than their clubbable faculties. Had it, on entering the New Lyceum, doubled the number of its members, enlarged its menu, reformed its cellar, required half-a-dozen annual attendances from each brother, and recruited itself from the “*boys about town*,” the Sublime Society would have flourished to this day. But lacking the courage to take these recuperative measures, it grew weaker and more infirm, until it breathed its last in Mr. Arnold’s tender hands, and left its chattels to the auctioneer’s hammer.

The honour of belonging to the Sublime Steaks was costly. In the palmiest days of the club the entrance fee of each new member was £26 5s., a charge reduced to £10 10s. in 1849. The “whips” for current expenses were on the average equal to an annual subscription of £10 from each brother. At the same time a member paid five shillings for every dinner of which he partook, and half-a-guinea for his friend’s entertainment. The price paid to

the butcher for steaks was on the average half-a-crown a pound.

Notwithstanding the growing distaste for the broiled slice, Steak Clubs are still numerous in London and the provinces. Of those which still meet in the Covent Garden and Strand quarter, none is more vigorous and famous than “Our Club,” at whose board Dickens (as a visitor) ate his steak, and Thackeray (as a member) used to sing the “Mahogany Tree” and “Little Billee.” It is true that since Douglas Jerrold founded “Our Club,” on the understanding that the fare should consist of fish, steaks, marrow-bones, and toasted cheese, the menu has been enlarged with proper consideration for squeamish appetites and weak stomachs. But though the weekly banquet at Clunn’s comprises joints and made dishes, it still remains a steak feast for those who care to dine heartily on broiled steaks, plain or shallotted. By the way, Dr. Diamond, an original member of “Our Club,” is the gastronomer who discovered that the distinguishing virtues of marrow on toast are delicately sustained and emphasized by a few drops of the best anchovy sauce.

Alexandre Dumas was mistaken in supposing that the beef-steak was unknown in Paris before Waterloo. So early as 1814, Monsieur Beauvilliers, in “L’Art du Cuisinier,” extolled the English “rome-

steck" in terms which prove that Parisian epicures were already familiar with the excellences of the viand. It follows that the novelist was not historically justified in applauding the French of 1815 for the generous superiority to prejudice and passion, which distinguished their prompt acceptance of a culinary lesson from their insolent conquerors. Dumas, however, was right in observing that, after trying steaks taken from the several choice parts of the ox, his countrymen preferred the "bifteck d'loyau" to the "romesteck." Admitting that we may do well in preferring the rump-cuts of our prime animals, he insists that in France, where oxen are usually worked on the farm before they are fatted for the table, and seldom pass to the butcher till labour has hardened their muscle, the epicure exercises a wise discretion in taking his "biftecks" from the juiciest part of the loin, although he thus obtains the maximum of tenderness at a considerable sacrifice of flavour. The English idler in Paris would not so often express surprise at the exquisite tenderness of his "bifteck," and refer disparagingly to the beef of his native land, if he knew the anatomical and gastronomic differences of the Parisian "filet d'loyau" and the London rump-steak.

Of the intimate relations established by gastronomy between steaks and oysters, there is no need to speak. If beef enables us to appreciate liberty,

it is to the “native” that we are indebted for our perception of some of the finer excellences of beef. So long as the “rump” survives, the “dozen” will ever be found at its side. But ere we pass from beef to less majestic delicacies, let us render homage to beef-steak pudding, than which no goodlier fare can be found for a strong hungry man on a cold day. Rising from his pudding at the “Cheshire Cheese,” such a feaster is at a loss to say whether he should be most grateful for the tender steak, savoury oyster, seductive kidney, rich gravy, ardent pepper, or delicate paste. Steak-pie is one of those culinary blunders for which even charity has no excuse. Hot, it is a greasy mistake; cold, it is an outrage and a disaster. The abominable thing would be less afflicting to the temper and the digestion, were it not for the appetizing look of its poisonous crust.

CHAPTER III.

PIE AND PIE-TART.

“Tartlettes.—Take veal goode, and grynde it smale. Take harde egron ysode, and ygrond, and do thereto with prunes hoole, dates icorved, pynes, and raisons corans, hool spices, and powder, sugar, salt, and make a litell coffyn, and do this fare thereinne, and bake it, and serve it forthe.”—THE FORME OF CURY,

“ Why, little Jack, be sure would eat
 His Christmas pye in rhyme;
 And said, Jack Horner in the corner
 Eats good Christmas pye,
 And with his thumb pulls out the plumb,
 And said, good boy am I.”

HISTORY OF JACK HORN.

“ Let never fresh machines your pastry try,
 Unless grandes or magistrates are by,
 Then you may put a dwarf into a pye,
 Or if you fright an alderman and mayor,
 Within a pasty lodge a living hare:
 Then midst their gravest furs shall mirth arise,
 And all the Guild pursue with joyful cries.”

KING’S “ART OF COOKERY.”

THE late Duke of Cambridge’s favourite dinner was roast pig and apple dumpling. The late Lord Dudley was never satisfied with a banquet which afforded no apple-pie. “ God bless my soul, no apple-pie !” he muttered repeatedly, with mingled surprise and discontent, as he looked in vain for his favourite fruit-dish at Prince Esterhazy’s sump-

tuously provided table. Mr. Hayward records that his lordship “insisted on calling it apple-pie, contending that the term ‘tart’ only applied to open pastry.”

Old friendships have been broken and fortunes lost by contention about the precise and distinctive meanings of “pie” and “tart.” Like Lord Dudley, Charley Silkstone, whilom the most supercilious of dandies about town, stubbornly refused to call apple-pie a tart.

“Shall I send you some apple-tart?” inquired Charley’s great Aunt Martha, the severe and frigid widow of Sir Andrew Curtis, gin-distiller.

“Thank you, Lady Curtis, I will take some apple-pie,” returned Charley.

“Fruit pies are tarts,” great-aunt Curtis urged authoritatively.

“What you call apple-tart is always called apple-pie in ‘society,’ ” was the rejoinder.

Charley had his apple-pie, but he missed great-aunt Martha’s farms in Surrey, which, in consequence of the dispute, were left to another great-nephew, who had the prudence to agree with the imperious lady on the important question.

Pie, the abbreviation of *pâtisserie*, together with all the cognate terms, such as paste, pastry, *pâté*, patty, is a derivative of the Latin *pistum*, the past participle of *pinsere*, “to beat together.” Junius,

with his Greek *παστός*, and Skinner, with his Latin *pastus*, are out of the discussion. Whether they be earthy or farinaceous, materials beaten, kneaded, or otherwise worked into an adhesive mass are “paste.” And pastry is the generic term for all culinary preparations that are served on layers or in cases, whether opened or closed, of farinaceous paste. Pie is nothing but an abbreviation of this generic term. All tarts are pies, but all pies are not tarts.

What in strict language is tart? By what feature is “tart” distinguishable from other kinds of pies? The answer may not be sought in its ingredients, though some of our culinary writers countenance the erroneous notion that tarts are indebted for their distinctive appellation to the acidulous quality of the materials served on their pastry. The difference is one of manner, instead of matter. Pies may be of flesh or fish, and yet be tarts. They may be of fruit, and yet be only pies. The etymological and gastronomic distinctions of “pie” and “tart” consist altogether in the fashion of the paste. The word “tart,” *tarte* in the French, comes to us from the Latin *torta*, the participle of *torquere*, to twist. Tart, the thing, is paste twisted into fantastic shapes. Lord Lytton spoke correctly of the “tarts and confectionery, tortured into a thousand fantastic shapes,” that appeared in the third

course of Glaucus's Pompeian supper. Whatever the compound offered *on* the crust, a piece of *uncovered* plain pastry, that has undergone no *torturing* touches at the cook's hands, is an "open pie." A pie, whether closed or open, whether its contents be meat, or fruit, or custard, may be called "tart" when any portion of its paste has been twisted or manipulated fancifully by the maker.

The vessel, or dish of paste, *i.e.*, the primitive patty-pan, fashioned to receive the ingredients of a pasty, was called in the Old English kitchen a "trap." When *covered* with a lid of paste, so as to be the case or shell of a closed pie, it was called a coffin. In such traps, open, grated, or coffined, our cooks of olden time put flesh, fish, fruit, vegetables, and the various compounds of milk and eggs, now-a-days called *custard*. Any compound kept in store ready to be put into such traps was termed "tartee." In the "Forme of Cury" may be found receipts for tartees of flesh, fish, herbs, apples, and dry fruit. The same old work gives us the word "tartelette," as a term for any pie of moderate size and tortured pastry. A tortured pie, big enough to feed half-a-dozen persons, was sometimes styled a "tartlette" by Richard the Second's cooks, who also made very minute tartlets—no bigger than our smallest mince pies—that were often served swimming in potage.

Another Old English term for pie was "crustard," corrupted in the course of time to custard. On being baked so that it had the hardness of ice or the shell of a fish, farinaceous paste was at an early period of our cuisine called crust, from the Latin *crusta*. In mediæval England pies of every kind might be called crustards; but in our Elizabethan age the term seems to have been confined to fruit-pies and milk-pudding pies. At that time apple-pies were commonly called "custards," and apples good for use in pies—i.e., what are now-a-days termed "good cooking-apples"—were sold as custard (or costard) apples, and then as "costards." The fruit having been so designated, the dealers in cooking apples were called *costard* (or *coster*) mongers. "Coddling" was another term produced by the same period to designate a good cooking-apple. "To coddle" is "to intenerate by the heat of gently boiling water;" and the apple which could be thus cossetted and coddled into tenderness was styled "a codling." The term was occasionally applied to other vegetables which yielded readily to the influence of the pot. For instance, peas that softened readily in hot water were "codling peas." Mr. Gifford was of the questionable opinion that Ford's "hot codlings" in "The Sun's Darling" were hot peas.

Robert May gives several receipts for cooking

quodlings, *alias* codlings. He served them in pies, fool-cream, and also in small earthen or metal dishes (patty-pans) without paste. “Take green quodlings and quodle them,” he says in a direction for a pie, “peel them and put them again into the same water, cover them close, and let them *simper* on embers till they be very green, then take them up and let them drain, pick out their noses, and leave on the stalks, then put them in a pye, and put to them fine sugar, whole cinnamon, slic’t ginger, a little musk and rose water, close them up with a tight cover, and as soon as it boils up in the oven, draw it and ice it with rose-water, butter, and sugar. Or you may preserve them and bake them in a dish, with paste, tart, or patty-pan.”

The same chef’s receipt for codling cream is also noteworthy. “Codle forty fair codlings green and tender, then peel them and core them, and beat them, strain them with a quarte of cream, and mix them well together in a dish with fine sugar, sack, musk, and rose-water. This you may do with any fruit you please.” Fruit thus boiled, *pressed* through a sieve or colander, and mixed with cream or new milk, was called *fruit foulé*, speedily corrupted into “fruit fool.” Gooseberry cream, or fool, still retains the foolish designation.

Pear-pie is seldom seen now-a-days on the English table; but no fruit-dish was more highly esteemed

by our ancestors than a tart of warden-pears, *i.e.*, the warden-pie celebrated in a well-known song by a composer of the present century. “Bake your wardens or pears in an oven,” says the author of “The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth Cromwell” (1664), “with a little water and good quantity of sugar, let your pot be covered with a piece of dough, let them not be fully baked by a quarter of an hour; when they are cold make a high coffin, and put them in whole, adding to them some cloves, whole cinnamon, sugar, with some liquor they were boiled in, so bake it.” Another receipt for a warden-dish appears in an earlier work, to which the compiler of “The Court and Kitchen” was largely indebted. “You must,” says the author of “A Cookery Book” (1650), “bake your wardens first in a *pye*, and then take all the wardens and cut them in foure quarters, and coare them, and put them in a *tart pinched*, with your sugar, cinnamon and ginger, and set them in an oven, and put no cover on them; but you must cut a cover, and lay on the *tart* when it is baked, and butter the *tart* and cover too, and endore it with sugar.” This receipt is interesting as testimony that so late as the seventeenth century our more exact writers on cookery drew the right distinction between “pie” and “tart,” applying the latter term only to “pie” which had been curiously handled. Pastry became “tart” on being

pinched with the fingers, and the entire piece of pinched pastry was *the tart* on which the fruit was laid. The cover, a *plain* lid of pie, was no part of the fantastically-shaped paste, to which alone the term “tart” was strictly applicable.”

This same Book of Cookery for 1650 gives another receipt, in which *tart* is used in the same carefully limited sense. “To make a *tart* of *custards*—You must take halfe a hundredth of *custards*, and pare them, and cut them, and as soon as you have cut them, put them in a pot, and put in two or three pound of sugar, and a pint of water, and a little rose-water, and stirre from the time you put them in, until the time you take them out again; or else you may also put it in a dish, and when your tart is made, put it in the oven, and when it is baked endore it with butter, and throw sugar on the top, and then put on your sauce, and set comfits on the top, and so serve it.” To the writer of these directions the fruit and tart were separate things. Having been coddled in the pot, the “*custards*” were laid upon the baked tart-paste, which was forthwith glazed and garnished. “A *tart* of *custards*” signified a mess of “coddled custards served on tart,” or twisted pastry. The same habit of discriminating between the component parts of an elaborate pie, *i.e.*, between the tart and the material served with it, appears in

“The Good Huswives Handmaid,” (1595), “The Widdowe’s Treasure,” (1595), and “The Good Huswife’s Jewell,” (1595-7), from which the compiler of 1650 took the greater part of his materials for “A Cookery Book.” By the way, one of the receipts in the “Huswife’s Jewell” is for “a tart that is a courage to a man or woman.” In this case, the preparation served on *tart* was a boiled and strained mess of quinces, vegetables, roots, yolks of eggs and brains of sparrows, highly qualified with wine and spices.

Whilst pies were termed crustards or custards, and milk-puddings of every variety were served in plain or tart pastry, a common preparation of milk and eggs gradually acquired its now distinctive name from the crust in which it was generally brought to table. It is long since apple-pie was usually termed a “tart of custards.” Even in our markets the fruit from which our costermongers derive their designation is rarely called a costard. But whether they be baked or boiled, the grateful combinations of milk and eggs are still termed *custard* from the baked paste, which in olden time used to embed and cover them.

Humble-pie, a pasty to which we are indebted for several familiar and pungent sayings, was largely eaten at the old English table by gourmands of every grade, and at the Elizabethan table by per-

sons whose quality did not entitle them to the best fare.

The word “umbles” (from the Latin *umbilicus*) has been long used to designate the entrails and other internal parts of the deer. Webster gives this limited meaning of the term, and Pegge used the word in the same restricted sense. In our mediæval time, however, the abdominal viscera of swine, sheep and oxen were called “umbles.” Pegge’s “Ancient Cookery” (No. 3) contains a receipt for humble-stew, which begins thus: “Take nombuls of a calf, or of a swyne, or of a shepe.” The term even comprehended the paunches of the larger fishes. “Nombuls of purpoys” were cooked like those of swyne in the fourteenth century, and the compilers of “The Forme of Cury” give directions how “to make noumbles for Lent,” out of the chopt “panches of pykes, of congers, and of great cod lyng.” Our feudal ancestors were great consumers of umbles, serving them in half-a-dozen different ways and spelling the name in as many various fashions. They had soups, hashes, stews, and pasties of humbles. Tripe, at present seldom seen in the houses of the rich, though still acceptable to the populace, was one of the humble-messes in which the old English delighted. The same may be said of the liver-and-bacon, i.e., pig’s fry, beloved by Lord Chancellor Eldon.

In the days of the Plantagenets, humbles of all kinds were rated as dainty fare. But the Tudor cooks and epicures regarded them with qualified disdain, as meat fit for the inferior boards of noble banquets, but inappropriate to the highest tables. Humble having thus fallen into disesteem, it became the fashion to serve them in pies and hashes to sitters beneath the salt, whilst the occupants of the higher seats were regaled with slices from the prime joints. The usage gave rise to several phrases. To eat humble-pie was to sit at the lower table, and, in the case of an arrogant guest, to experience humiliation. Children of the riper ages were often threatened with "humble-pie," as a punishment for misbehaviour; that is to say, they were menaced with degradation from their places above the salt at the family table. Under the rule of severe parents, a young lady of marriageable years would for some venial offence—such as malapertness to mamma, or coquetry with an ineligible suitor—lose her right to sit with her brothers and sisters, and be required for a month at a time to take her place at meals with the superior dependents of the household. Whilst thus in disgrace, she was said to be eating humble-pie. On amending her ways, and showing fit penitence, she was restored to the company and joints of the higher board. Contumacious boys, too old to be whipped

and put in the corner, were in like manner reduced to proper submissiveness with ignominious diet at the bottom of the table.

Before it thus took rank with the birch and the foolscap as an instrument of domestic punishment, humble-pie had lost much of its original merit. John Murrell taught the readers of his "New Cookery Book" (1630) how, in the absence of "right humbles," to make humble-pies of sheep's-head and the minced "pluck." Henceforth the common pasty of the lower table seldom contained anything better than livers and hearts of oxen. More often than not, its thick, heavy crust covered an omnium-gatherum of scraps and bones and other refuse of the previous week's dinners, recooked with potatoes and slices of pumpkin. In fact, it became that gastronomic abomination which the wit of a more recent age christened "The Refuge of the Destitute."

On his return from Italy, Thomas Coryate commended frogs as delicate fare to the notice of his fellow-countrymen; and the suggestion was ere long fruitful of the frog-pies which the epicures of Charles the First's London ate with infinite gust. In his directions for cooking "frogs in the Italian fashion," Robert May orders that their thighs should be dressed with, and served in, pastry, together with the flesh of eels and fruit. "Season

them both with pepper, nutmeg, and ginger," says the chef, " lay butter on your paste, and lay a rank of frog, and a rank of eel, some currants, gooseberries or grapes, raisins, pine-apple seeds, juyce of orange, sugar, and butter : this do three times, close up your dish, and being baked, ice it," i.e., with sugar. Frog-pie, thus compounded, was often seen at the best London tables, any time between James the First's later years and Charles the Second's death. Just as George the Third's commonalty scorned the French for living chiefly on frogs, the "populace" of England in the seventeenth century imagined that frogs were the principal food of the fantastic and vicious Italians.

Readers of "The Sentimental Journey" do not need to be reminded that, in consideration of their amphibious nature, the church rated frogs as a species of fish, and allowed the faithful to eat them during Lent, a fact that accounts for the esteem in which their weak and flavourless flesh was held by gastronomers in Catholic countries. Poor viand though it was, frog-flesh was better than none. The sea-fowl, called in France "macreuse," was also allowed for Lenten diet to pious gourmands who relished the bird of rank fishy taste on meagre days, but never touched it when they might eat better meat. The large circular macreuse pies, served at the table of Louis XIV. in seasons of

fasting, sometimes measured two feet in diameter.

Another pie, highly fashionable in Stuart England, was the surprise-pie, which was no sooner opened than one or more living creatures issued from the breach in the crust. A pie of this kind might contain half-a-dozen live frogs, that on leaping from the crust to the table-cloth, and from the cloth to a lady's plate or lap, would throw her into hysterics. Or it might with equal propriety hide a score live sparrows that, on escaping from the pie-dish, would fly to the candles and put a large supper-party in darkness. Robert May served a surprise-pie of frogs, and another of birds, in the Twelfth Night trophy mentioned in a former chapter of this work. To such a bird-pie, served at Charles the First's table, when these "surprises" were not more absurd than novel, we are indebted for the rhymes :

"Sing a song of sixpence !
Sing it to the sky !
Four and-twenty black-birds baked in pie,
When the pie was opened,
The birds began to sing,
Wasn't this a pretty sight to set before the king."

Pies of live birds and frogs having become matters of course to modish revellers, other creatures were employed to sustain the surprising character of surprise pastry. Toy-terriers, squirrels, hares,

foxes, and mannikin pages were in turn used for the astonishment of people who, on the look-out for a live pie of some kind, could be startled only by the apparition of an unexpected animal. When a score different creatures had been served in surprise pies to Charles the First, and he was weary of surprises that were no longer astonishing, his humour was pleasantly tickled by the unlooked-for appearance of the dwarf, Jeffrey Hudson, who had been placed under crust on a table spread for the entertainment of royalty at Burleigh-on-the-Hill. The sovereign had been trapped into asking for a piece of the unusually large game-pie, when, on the removal of the cover of paste, the dwarf, armed with sword and buckler, sprang from the "coffin," and ran down the table to his liege lord and Henrietta Maria. In the "Anecdotes of Painting," Horace Walpole says that this incident occurred some time about 1630, whilst their Majesties were the guests of the Duke and Duchess of Buckingham.

It would have fared ill with any officious servitor who had ventured to arrest the imp as he danced down the table, clearing in successive leaps the dishes in his way; for the diminutive page had already earned a reputation for dare-devil pugnacity. Nettled by the affront, he would have seized the first opportunity to avenge it with the sword that had been put into his hands for sportive

use. A more fearless and impetuous fellow never lived than this pie-famous page, who, on attaining his majority and the fullness of his small stature, became as conspicuous in arms as Richard Gibson (Charles the First's mannikin and *miniature-painter*) was in arts. A captain in the Royal Army, he distinguished himself in service against the rebels of the Long Parliament, and after retiring to France in the suite of Henrietta Maria, exhibited his martial prowess by fighting a duel on horseback with Mr. Crofts, and killing him at the first shot. Always carrying pistols, which he used with equal promptitude and dexterity, Jeffrey never shirked the kind of combat in which his minuteness gave him the advantage over men of large size. Too small to be hit, he was quite big enough to kill. When Pope assumed pocket fire-arms in self-defence, observing that with pistols the pygmy was a match for the giant, he is supposed to have alluded to little Hudson; who, by the way, eventually died of gaol fever in the Gate-House, where he had been taken on suspicion of complicity in the Popish plot.

Some of the pasties set before English epicures in the seventeenth century were so loaded with fat and larded meat, that it gives one a sick headache to read the orders for their composition. Robert May served a generation that delighted in marrow-pies and bacon-tarts. In cold seasons Giles Rose often

sent to Charles the Second's board a pasty of Westphalia Gammon, from which the grossest feeders of our time would turn with disgust. The gammon was boiled, minced, sugared, larded, and seasoned with cinnamon, pepper, and citron before it was cased in dough, and committed to the oven. On being taken from the oven, it was drenched with lemon-juice, covered with sugar, and served hot. A choicer compound for epicures, disposed to heart-burn and bilious headache, was the London pie, a receipt for which may be found in the "Archimagirus Anglo-Gallicus," the cookery-book attached by its audacious compiler to the fame of Sir Theodore Mayerne, the physician, who was no more accountable for the treatise than Abernethy was for the nasty seed-biscuit which simple people still consume to their injury, under the impression that it was invented by the great surgeon for the special comfort of dyspeptic sufferers.

"Take eight marrow-bones," says the author of "Archimagirus Anglo - Gallicus," " eighteen sparrows, one pound of potatoes, a quarter of a pound of eringoes, two ounces of lettuce-stalks, forty chesnuts, a peck of oysters, a quarter of a pound of preserved citron, three artichokes, twelve eggs, two sliced lemons, a handful of pickled barberries, a quarter of an ounce of whole pepper, half an ounce of sliced nutmeg, half an ounce of whole

cloves, half an ounce of mace, and a quarter of a pound of currants. Liquor, when it is baked, with white wine, butter, and sugar." Mr. Robert Chambers asserts that a pie made in accordance with this receipt was eaten not long since with lively satisfaction by a party of gastronomers. The reader probably will not regret that he had no finger in the mess.

Whilst the French were famous for the enormity of their Lenten macreuse-pies, the English achieved celebrity by making turkey-pies of prodigious circumference and weight. Dr. Lister states that in the diocese of Durham a hundred squab turkeys were put into a single pie for the regalement of the bishop's clerical visitors. Though a mere patty by the side of one of these Durham pasties, the pie made at Howick in 1770 for the regalement of Sir Henry Grey's London friends was a weighty matter. Mrs. Dorothy Patterson, the Howick housekeeper, used two bushels of flour and twenty pounds of butter in the manufacture of its crust, which contained four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, four wild ducks, two woodcocks, six snipes, and four partridges, two neat's tongues, two curlews, six blackbirds, and six pigeons. Put in the scales, this monstrous pasty raised the weight of twelve stones. At Sir Henry Grey's table it was served on a carriage fitted with

four wheels, so that it was easily moved to and fro by its admiring consumers.

But no pie still served at the English table has stronger claims than the minced or shred pie to the student's respectful consideration. Pasties of superior flavour and delicacy rise to the epicure's imagination at the sound of the word "pie," but he will search in vain for a more ancient or widely-famous custard. Not more rich in multifarious ingredients than in historic associations, it proclaims the origin of our Old English cuisine, and commemorates the cookery which prevailed in England from the Roman occupation to the decay of feudalism. Made on Apician principles, of many materials and with an unsparing use of the knife, it was served at British and Saxon tables of pre-Norman date, and after witnessing the culinary changes of a thousand years, it remains a dainty for men of all estates, and a symbol of festivity even to the valetudinarians who dare not eat it. The theme of poets who sung before the invention of printing, it also elicited countless pleasantries from the Elizabethan wits, and became a subject of controversy to the pulpiteers and fanatics of the seventeenth century. The *Christmas Pie* of Little Jack Horner, was made in prodigious quantities for the festal requirements of a season when, in default of fresh fruit from the garden and orchard, the lovers of good cheer squandered their

money on preserved fruits, and gratefully accepted the raisin as a substitute for the grape. But it is a mistake to suppose that it was seen only at Christmas. Easter holiday-makers preferred the cheesecake and custard of milk and eggs to the preparation of dried fruit, on which they had often feasted to satiety during the previous months. And as soon as the fruits of the garden and orchard came in season no time was lost in bringing them to table, for whilst prudence counselled that such perishable blessings should be enjoyed when they could be obtained, the heat created a universal appetite for cooling and acidulous food. But the pie, which took one of its names from the season when no other fruit-pie could be had, was never quite *out of season*. Adored and devoured immoderately in the Winter, it was eaten thankfully in Spring and Autumn, and not altogether neglected in the dog-days.

Nor are there sufficient grounds for the common opinion that the seventeenth century Puritans abhorred mince-pie as a thing reverenced superstitiously, if not worshipped idolatrously, by the malignant multitude. Some few of the more ignorant people unquestionably regarded it with sentiments of religious enthusiasm; and Anabaptists of the wildest and fiercest kind occasionally denounced the pie as a Pagan contrivance for bringing

souls to perdition. But it would be unjust to attribute the extravagances of a score fanatics to the general body of the Puritans who, disapproving of Christmas revelries, refrained from eating rich fare at a season which they devoted to religious exercises and serious meditation. Samuel Butler admits that the Puritans, whom he covered with ridicule, were not more ready to eat mince-pie than to speak hard words of other Christmas delicacies,

“ Rather than fail they will decry
That which they love most tenderly;
Quarrel with minc'd pies, and disparage
Their best and dearest friend, plum-porridge,
Fat pig and goose itself oppose,
And blaspheme custard through the nose.”

The political satirist may be excused for omitting to remark that these opponents of pig and goose only denounced the custom of feasting greedily on such dainties in the Christmas week, and had enough gastronomic sensibility to relish “ pie” at less sacred seasons. Butler’s biographer, however, had the fairness to exhibit this side of Puritan opinion with regard to luxuries of the table. “ We,” says Samuel Johnson, “ have never been witnesses of animosities excited by the use of mince-pies and plum-porridge, nor seen with what abhorrence those who could eat them at all other times of the year would shrink from them at Christmas.”

The author of “*Hudibras*” was not the only Royalist wit to insist that, in censuring what they deemed an abuse of pie, the Puritans quarrelled with pie itself. A chapter, if not a volume, could be made of scraps of merry writing, that thus misstate the attitude and object of the “sour fanatics” in a controversy which ended in their defeat. The war about plums only confirmed the populace in its seasonable love of them, and gave an almost sacred significance to the dried fruit and spices which had been adopted as chief ingredients of Christmas fare, merely because no better materials for sweet food could be bought in mid-winter. In the reaction against Puritanism, the soup abhorred by the saints was extolled by the sinners above all other pottages; and persons with no sincere liking for “pie” ate it greedily, from a sense of politico-religious duty, at the season in which they had been sanctimoniously admonished to abstain from it. Ay, more, in their contempt for Puritanism, the people, gradually ceasing to eat plum-food at other festivals, declared that the slandered pie should be deemed strictly seasonable at no time but Christmas.

At present the national pie is seldom seen at the best tables, save in the form of small covered tartlets; but in the seventeenth century it was usually served in large rectangular crustards. The Christ-

mas pie of the Restoration cuisine, rarely weighing less than fourteen pounds, often exceeded several stones in weight. Selden gravely declared that its coffin was made in imitation of the infant Saviour's cratch or manger. When the learned and seldom incautious antiquary could speak thus wildly of the oldest form of pie-trap, which had been used from the earliest days of our mediæval cookery for pies of every size and variety, the multitude were assured by more imaginative scribes that the rich meat lying in the cratch was symbolical of the Saviour's nature.

It should also be observed that, though made on Apician principles and with nice observance of the process from which it derives its name, modern mince-meat differs materially from the “mince” of olden time. Consisting chiefly of flesh, the mediæval shred pasty was a meat-pie with just enough dried fruits to give the flesh a fruity flavour. The fruits, the costliest of its materials, were quite subordinate ingredients of the compound, that sometimes contained a score of different kinds of flesh. By degrees the proportion of fruit was increased, in compliance with a growing taste for raisins and citron-peel, and also from the hospitable reluctance of entertainers to exhibit parsimony in the use of such expensive dainties. The developments of British commerce, however, had brought the dried

fruits and spices of Southern Europe to the tables of our prosperous commonalty, if not of our poorer folk, long before the foreign ingredients of the national pie were used profusely even in the kitchens of the wealthy. Raisins of the sun and currants from the Levant were not exhibited in the window of every village grocer's shop in the seventeenth, or even in the eighteenth century. Bought at prices that would scandalize housekeepers of the present time, they were kept under lock and key, and brought out at festal times with proper regard for their costliness. In "weighing out" such luxuries on the approach of Christmas, the thrifty dame of a Caroline household kept a sharp eye on the beam of her store-room scales. What the "receipt" demanded she gave honestly and precisely. But she never threw in an extra plum or drachm of peel. A century later such care was needless. Dried fruits were cheaper, and as they fell in price, they were used more lavishly in festive messes. The rapid growth of our commerce was reflected in our pie-pans, and proclaimed by every Christmas pudding. It had worked a revolution in our oldest national dish. What was once only its costly flavour had become its chief and cheap substance, and the fleshly ingredients which in old time afforded nine-tenths of its bulk had become the subordinate elements of Christmas pie. Modern

taste reduced still further the fleshly constituents of the revolutionized pie. For awhile it authorized the use of mutton as a material for qualifying the excessive richness of the fruits. Ere long the soft neat's tongue was substituted for mutton. At present, finely chopt suet is the only animal substance used in the mince-meat of our best housekeepers, and this last survivor of all the flesh, that once dwelt in Christmas pie, is retained as a whimsical additament and a graceful reference to the history of the compound, rather than as a fundamental ingredient.

But whilst our ancestors of the seventeenth century, and earlier half of the following age, were enriching the mince-pie with larger and larger quantities of fruit and candied rind to the ultimate exclusion of its ancient *substance*, they continued to season their ordinary meat-pies after the fashion of their forefathers, with slight sprinklings of dried plums and currants. The meat-pies that made “kit-cat famous” were thus sweetened to the taste of gourmands, who resembled the Old English in liking to puzzle their palates with combinations of incongruous flavours. The same was the case with the mutton-pies that brought honour and wealth to Ben Tyrrell at Oxford. The gastronomic condition, which enabled our forefathers to relish such a culinary paradox as fruitified flesh, is not yet extinct

from our people. Polite feeders are still sometimes seen taking red currant jelly with roast mutton and hare. The taste for plum-sauce—a barbarous contrivance for spoiling fine natural flavours—still survives amongst the commonalty of our provinces, who have been taught to think it a proper seasoning for meat. It has, however, entirely disappeared from Norfolk since Rush the murderer ordered pig and plum-sauce for his last dinner.

To pass from mince-pie—the ancientst of all still eaten pies—to the pies of Perigord and Strasbourg, is to withdraw the vision from a majestic oak and survey the flowers of yesterday. Much might be said in behalf of each of these foreign *pâtés*. But both are open to objection. The pie of Strasbourg has a noble flavour and distinctive richness, but whilst he requires an unusually strong stomach to endure the one, the epicure must have an unfeeling heart to enjoy the other quality. Whatever its excellences, the delicacy which provokes bilious head-ache cannot on the whole be more productive of happiness than of misery. The dainty, which results from the torture of helpless creatures, is no choice fare for the gentle guest who knows the secret of its manufacture. Epicures are strangely inconsistent, or they would not shudder at the thought of intenerating pigs with the lash, and a moment later smile at the agonies of the Strasbourg geese.

The pie of Perigord is less abhorrent to the tender heart, but even more perilous to the failing stomach. Nature should either have made truffles less delicious, or have endowed all men with the power to digest them. There are statisticians who insist that, when he died in the eighteenth century, Courtois, the inventor of the Perigord pie, had killed more men than were subsequently destroyed in the Great Napoleon's battles. Perhaps the men of numbers overstate the case. But Napoleon survived his power of killing on a grand scale. It ceased at his fall. The destructiveness of a pie-maker does not necessarily end with his death. Courtois bequeathed his *secrets* to his daughter, Madeleine Pressac.

CHAPTER IV.

POULTRY.

"Our tame foule are such (for the most part) as are common both to us and to other countries, as cocks, hens, geese, ducks, peacocks of Inde, pigeons."—WILLIAM HARRISON'S "INTRODUCTION TO HOLINSHED'S CHRONICLES."

"Beefe, mutton and porke, shred pies of the best,
Pig, veale, goose and capon and turkie well drest,
Chese, apples and nuts, jolie carols to heare,
And then in the countrie, is counted good cheare."

TUSSELLS "FIVE HUNDRED POINTS OF HUSBANDRY."

"We have poultreer's ware for your sweet bloods, as dove, chicken, duck, teal, woodcock and so forth."—DEKKER'S "HONEST WHORE."

THE horse, as we were all taught in early childhood, is a noble animal. It is not fowl. But considerations justify the historian of food in mentioning its flesh in a chapter on poultry. Cooks and higglerers take larger views of some subjects than compilers of dictionaries. Webster defines poultry as "domestic fowls which are propagated and fed for the table, and for their eggs and feathers." Richardson, more severely etymological, describes poultry as "the *young* of birds usually called domestic fowls." Disregarding the dictionaries, our cooks have long ranked rabbits with poultry; and there are dealers in good cheer who insist that

butter and Neuchâtel cheese are poultry. The elastic term is even made to cover some of the hereditary enemies of the fowl-yard. The foxes, systematically imported from Antwerp to this country for purposes of sport, are cleared through the Harwich custom-house under the felicitous designation of poultry.

Custom enables us to relish any diet, however offensive to epicurean principles. Whilst the Scotchman devours haggis with gusto, and smacks his lips over oatmeal porridge, the Suffolk farmer believes that his abominable dumpling, greased with dripping, is a dainty. There is no aliment so repulsive to the imagination or taste, that man cannot be trained to enjoy it. His teeth have watered over the flesh of apes, serpents, and vermin. Nothing is sweeter to a gipsy's tooth than a fine hedge-hog baked in clay. There are times when even civilized man will consent to stay his hunger by feeding on his own species. Indeed, with the jocularity which often conveys wholesome truths, Sydney Smith once spoke of "cold curate" as an exquisite delicacy, under certain conditions. Charles the Fifth's chronicler, Don Anthony of Guevara, was amazed and slightly disgusted when he saw German epicures, in the highest society, eating roast sirloin of horse, cat in jelly, lizards served in frumenty, and frogs fried in batter. A century later, frogs, as we

have seen, were regularly cooked for the politest tables of England, France, and Italy. Lizards, though highly acceptable to the Romans, do not appear to have been ever generally eaten in this country. Nor have our gastronomers distinguished themselves as eaters of the cat. The *noble lord* who in 1791 bribed a London savage to eat a live cat, can have had no creditable purpose in the outrage which justified Warner in reflecting upon him as a disgrace of his order. As Selden remarked of John de Camey's behaviour in selling his wife to William Paynel, this *noble lord's* conduct must be adjudged a “singular portent,” that throws no sure light on the propensities of our forefathers.

The horse, however, has been often eaten with thankfulness by Englishmen, either in default of more usual fare or from gastronomic curiosity; and in so doing they had the sanction of mediæval and ancient gastronomers, and also of modern peoples that can scarcely be stigmatized as barbarous. In Elizabeth's reign, General Doisell, commanding the French army in Scotland, set *powdered* horse before the English captains at a ceremonial banquet. Doubtless the English gentlemen would have preferred the viand “fresh;” but salted war-horse was the only flesh which their host had at hand. In quite recent times, serious attempts have been made in London and Paris to give horse-flesh a permanent

place amongst viands for the table. M. de Sainte-Hilaire's "Agapes de Cheval" were in the novelist's mind when he wrote for his "Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine," "il est probable que le noble animal que l'homme associe à sa gloire militaire, ne lui servira d'aliment que dans les circonstances exceptionnelles de blocus et de famine." Scarcely was the ink dry with which Dumas penned these words, when the Prussians were marching on Paris to associate horse-flesh with military disaster, and to raise the prime joints of young pony to fabulous prices in the markets of the beleaguered capital.

Whilst the *savans* of Paris discussed the gastronomic merits of horse-flesh, Mr. Bicknell was urging the London poor to eat the same meat. Plying his facile pen in the cause of hippophagy, Mr. Bicknell also endeavoured to lure his numerous friends to adopt his opinions by entertaining them with horse, cooked in various ways. Having demonstrated the culinary virtues of the noble animal, he turned his attention to the patient ass. "If you have nothing better to do," he wrote to the author of this work, shortly after the Langham Hotel Horse Banquet, "come to me and dine off donkey." The dinner was a great success. The company of "fair women and brave men" had enjoyed the soups, fish, and entrées, and some of them were screwing up their courage to take a slice of donkey on the appearance

of the "joints," when a guest observed to the host, "So far your dinner has been excellent, though rather common-place; but when will Neddy be served?"

The reply staggered the questioner, who subsequently confessed that he had partaken heartily of all the introductory dishes, with the intention of avoiding the asinine *pièce de résistance*.

"My dear fellow," the entertainer answered, "with the exception of the salmon, the chief materials of every dish handed to you were taken from a tender two-years-old donkey, killed six days since by my butcher. The soups, the patties which you mistook for veal patties, the cutlets that you imagined to be lamb, the fillet with truffles, were all of donkey."

Finding he had gone so far in a perilous investigation, the guest went a step further, and took a middle cutlet from "loin of donkey." It combined the texture of the finest mutton with the flavour of roast pig.

No one who went manfully through the equine menu of the Langham Hotel dinner needs to be told that the flesh of a young high-bred horse may be highly palatable and tender. But it is otherwise with meat taken from an animal which has endured the labour and hard usage that fall to the lot of an ordinary horse in its toilsome journey from the

breaker's stable to the knacker's yard. No amount of baiting, beating, and hanging can impart tenderness to the muscles of the hack that has for years spent its energies in the service of an exacting master. All the resources of culinary art fail to intenerate the animal that, after figuring proudly in its youth before a lordly chariot, has "run in a bus," and eventually died between the shafts of a street cab. The flesh of such a toil-hardened and sorely abused creature is rejected by the sausage-makers of Houndsditch. But still it may be made subservient to the needs of the luxurious table. Boiled, minced, and strongly seasoned with pepper, the muscle of the equine carcase, from which hounds would turn disdainfully, becomes a stimulating and nutritious food for poultry. The breeders and rearers of pullets for the Paris market have found that a diet, comprising a large proportion of highly-peppered animal food, is highly conducive to size and quick growth in their feathered stock. On five days of the week they feed their fattening poultry with a paste of meal and vegetables, and on two days give them nothing but well-cooked and highly-peppered meat, which the fowls devour ravenously. The flesh, so minced, boiled, and seasoned, is taken almost entirely from the carcases of worn-out horses. Hence it is no fiction to say that, whilst enjoying his chicken *mayonnaise* at the "Trois

Frères," the Parisian epicure often eats what a few weeks earlier helped to draw his carriage over the boulevards.

Other systems of fattening fowls are, however, employed by the French poulters. At Mans it is usual to "bring on" chickens by shutting them in the dark, and cramming them daily with a paste of barley-meal, maize, and milk, that is pushed down their throats to repletion. In some yards the house for fattening birds is fitted with wooden blinds, that enable the poulters to turn the daylight off and on at pleasure. On the exclusion of the sun's rays the fowls go instantly to the perch, and roost till the light again streams through the *jalousies*, when they come to the ground, and by force of habit fill their crops with food, under the impression that another day has begun. By this means the birds are induced to eat six times as much as they would otherwise devour spontaneously in a day. In former time the French poulters varied the flavour of their fowls by dieting them, often at prodigious cost, with paste qualified with musk, aniseed, and other aromatic spices. It is recorded of a French queen that she spent 1,500 francs (£60) in imparting a peculiarly delicate flavour to the livers of three geese. A crowing hen, however, never received any such flattering attentions from the French poulters, who no sooner heard a bird of this abnormal kind give

utterance to inappropriate song than he killed her as a preposterous usurper of masculine rights. An old French proverb says,

“ Poule qui chante, prêtre qui danse,
Femme qui parle latin,
N’arrivent jamais à belle fin.”

At present, the task of imparting false flavours to meat is left to the cook, and fowl-rearers are content to exert their ingenuity to bring their young birds to the *maximum* of size and fleshiness in the shortest possible time.

In the sixteenth century the English epicure ate habitually the crane, the stork, the heron-shaw, the bittern, the gull, and the bustard. With the exception of the bustard, still eaten occasionally from curiosity rather than gastronomic preference, these birds ~~are~~^{ever} even seen on our tables. Mr. Hayward mentions a fine bustard, sent by Fisher of Duke-street, St. James's, to Windsor Castle, at a charge of £7 12s. 6d. In Henry the Eighth's time the price of a fine bustard was four shillings—about £2 10s. of modern money. Speaking of Fisher, the author of the “Art of Dining” says, “He enjoyed the unlimited confidence of Lord Sefton, which is one of the highest compliments that can be paid to any man directly or indirectly connected with gastronomy, and he is, as we believe, the sole purveyor to the royal table. He has, by dint of

diligent study, acquired the art of fattening ortolans, which he sells at a tenth of the price they used to fetch." Chefs have achieved some of their brightest triumphs in dressing such small birds as the ortolan and the becafico. In his delight with twelve becaficoes served in egg-shells, so that they had the external appearance of real eggs, the venerable Duke of C——, commemorated in Soyer's "Pantropheon," turning to the youthful artiste who had prepared the exquisite surprise, exclaimed with fervour, " You are inspired by Petronius ; to imitate in such a manner is to create. Courage, my child, I am much pleased with you."

Small birds of the choicer kinds should be withheld from gastronomic novices and mere simpletons, who are strangely apt to mistake them for sparrows and common field-birds, and to devour them in ignorance of their value, if not in total insensibility to their excellence. Out of sheer modesty, a young deacon made his *last dinner* at Archbishop Markham's table on a dish of ruffs and reeves, which he devoured under the impression that such small creatures could have been cooked only for insignificant persons. "Na, na, my leddy, these wee birdies will do verra weel," said the unsophisticated Scotchman whom Lady Louisa Lennox vainly tried to lure from a dish of wheatears which he was

"putting down" his throat, merely because they would "do verra weel."

To return to large birds. Whilst they were habitual consumers of the stork and crane, our ancestors were also larger eaters of the peacock and the swan, two species of fowl which an Englishman may never have met at table, though he has fared luxuriously for half a century. But for their size and plumage, these fowls of faulty flesh and flavour would never have attained the gastronomic dignity accorded to them from the days of Apicius to those of Giles Rose. The swan is still eaten at civic feasts—Conservative sentiment enabling aldermen and their people to relish and digest anything. There is literally nothing that a Common Councilman won't swallow at a Corporation dinner if it is commended to his stomach on the score of "good Old English usage." The cygnet, however, when fattened for the table by a well-known Norwich poult erer, is almost unobjectionable, so much can art do for the inteneration and dulcification of its flesh. The young swan is sometimes carved at the high tables of the Cambridge colleges; and old-fashioned East-Anglian rectors may even yet be heard to extol it as a "dainty." From the gastronomic point of view Norwich is emphatically the City of Swans, and in pre-railway times, when bishops were expected to entertain hospitably the clergy summoned to

their palaces, Bishop Stanley delighted in giving his clerical subordinates the diocesan bird under circumstances most favourable for its reputation.

The honour of introducing the peacock to the table is universally attributed to Q. Hortensius, the brilliant advocate and voluptuary, who left his heir ten thousand casks of chian, and at the death of his favourite *muræna* shed tears that remind one of Erskine's fondness for his two leeches. In his foppishness and florid preciseness of diction, Erskine's forensic style, by the way, resembled that of the Roman orator, who loving peacock's flesh, liked also the pea-hen's eggs to such a degree that, when they were scarce, he would buy them at twenty pence a-piece, a price that to the Roman money-eaters heightened greatly the enjoyment of feeding on them.

Mention has been already made of the mediæval peacock feasts; but a few particulars should be added about them. Though usually served whole, or with the appearance of wholeness, in its hackell, “the food of lovers and the meat of lords” (as the bird was fancifully styled) sometimes appeared at table covered with gold-leaf instead of feathers. Stuffed with spices and served on a lordly charger (often of gold and silver) it held in its beak a piece of blazing camphor, and was generally brought to the board by a gentlewoman of high degree. At

the banquet after a jousting in the lists, it was sometimes borne to the feast by the Queen of the Tournament, who placed it before the knight of brightest valour and exploits. On such occasions the distinguished knight, before carving the bird, renewed over its gaudy plumage or gilt surface his oaths of chivalric devotion. To this knightly practice of swearing loyalty over the hackel (which in Elizabethan England contained a minced stuffing like that of a game-pie more often than the mere flesh of the bird), Justice Shallow was indebted for his oath “By cock and pie!” In the thirteenth century a peacock was deemed an appropriate prize for the victor at quintain.

In the King’s Lynn brass the peacocks are *sitting* in dishes; but the mediæval cooks knew how to set the roast, and dismembered a bird on his legs, so that with uplifted head, erect comb, and spread tail, it had all the appearances of animation. “Kill a peacock,” says Baptista Porta, “either by thrusting a quill into his brain from above, or else cut his throat as you do for young kids, that the blood may come forth, then cut his skin gently from his throat to his tail, and being cut, pull it off with his feathers from his whole body to his head; cut off that with the skin and legs and keep it. Rost the peacock on a spit, his body being stuffed with spices and sweet herbs, sticking first in his brest

cloves, and wrapping his neck in a white linen cloth, that it may never be dry ; when the peacock is roasted and taken from the spit, put him into his own skin again and that he may appear to stand upon his feet you shall thrust small iron wires, made on purpose, through his legs, and set fast on board that they may not be discerned, and through his body to his head and tail. Some put camphire in his mouth, and when he is set on the table they cast in fire. Platira shows that the same may be done with pheasants, geese, capons, and other birds, and we observe these things amongst our guests." By the same, or a similar process, our game-pies are still cased with the plumage of the cock-pheasant.

The peacock, served in the old Roman fashion, was often seen on the Elizabethan table. In satirical reference to the wasteful way in which it was cooked, Massinger in the "City Madam" makes Holdfast speak of "three fat wethers bruised to make sauce for a single peacock," words that have been taken literally by several incautious writers. And so long as it remained in fashion, the peacock was served at other festal times as well as at Christmas, to which season Robert Chambers especially assigns it in his essay on Old English Christmas fare. But apart from qualities that pleased the eye, the gaudy bird had no

virtues to justify the esteem in which it was held by gastronomers for seventeen centuries. Dr. Kitchener observes justly, “This bird is one of those luxuries which were often sought, because they were seldom found; its scarcity and external appearance are its only recommendations, the meat of it is tasteless and tough.” But the reputation, which had for sometime been waning, expired in the middle of the seventeenth century, when peacock’s flesh ceased to be extolled as a delicacy by nice epicures, though the “cock in hackle” was still commended by chefs as a superb contrivance for decorating the table. The bird was thus used as a mere ornament in the earlier half of the eighteenth century. One can scarcely say that at present it is *never* eaten; but having gratified his curiosity by tasting it once, no epicure desires to repeat the experiment.

Brummell once ate a pea. Alexandre Dumas *once*, and only once, ate a peacock in all the many years of his gastronomic experiences. “Je n’ai mangé du paon qu’une fois dans ma vie,” he says, “mais comme il était très-jeune et qu’il pouvait correspondre à ce qu’on appelle le poulet de grain, il me parut excellent.” The praise at the end of this sentence is notably qualified by the statement at its beginning. Had he really delighted

in the bird, which in full plume figured at an open-air banquet to which he was invited by his admirers in a small country town, the romantic voluptuary would not have failed to order the meat on subsequent occasions. By the way, this peacock feast was followed quickly by an annoyance. On his return to Paris from the village-town which had received him so enthusiastically, Alexandre wrote copiously to half-a-dozen journals about himself and the bird “avec son cou de saphir.” Much to his disgust, the editors of the newspapers returned Alexandre’s accounts of an affair that redounded equally to his own credit and the bird’s honour. Everything, however, comes to the hero who has enough patience. In his green old age, the author of “Monte Cristo” found an opportunity for using the rejected memoir of a peacock-dinner, which occupies a considerable space of the “Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine.” Another modern, but less recent, peacock-feast was the banquet given towards the close of the last century to a royal duke by the Governor of Grenada, West Indies, when, as we have already observed, a surprise-pie of living birds was opened before the future King of England. The table was a π (pi) table, and the royal bird with spread tail was set in the middle of the cross-board, immediately in front of the royal sailor.

As the peacock fell, the turkey rose in the esteem of epicures. Indeed, both the peacock and the swan may be said to have been driven from the table by the American fowl, which had no sooner crossed the Atlantic, than it was fitly honoured and cherished by the wealthiest gourmands of every European country.

The savans of the last century had a warm controversy respecting the history and original source of the noble fowl which, though inferior to the swan and peacock in plumage, equals the one and surpasses the other in magnitude, and excels both in texture and flavour of meat.

On the one side were those who, confounding the Transatlantic fowl with Guinea fowl, insisted that it was known to the Romans, and had been served at the sumptuous boards of mediæval Europe. Forgetful or ignorant of the quickness with which tobacco had fascinated the peoples of the Old World, and been promptly adopted in the Eastern lands to which it travelled by way of Europe, they argued that, had the first turkeys of the English table come from America, birds of their species would not have abounded in Italy, Spain, France, and this country by the middle of the seventeenth century. So also, unmindful or unaware that maize, long known in England as Turkey corn, was first obtained from America, they urged that the familiar name of the

fowl proclaimed the land of its nativity. Turkeys could only come from Turkey. It was even maintained, on the authority of Barrington, that before they were so called in this country, our ancestors designated them Greek fowls. The “capon of Grease,” mentioned by Leland as served at a banquet in the time of Edward the Fourth, were “capon of Greece.” On being reminded of the abundance of wild turkeys in America, the disputants on the side of error replied that the earliest West Indian adventurers had doubtless carried turkeys to America, even as they were known to have carried horses and cattle thither, and that the birds encountering in the New World a climate and other conditions highly favourable to them, had propagated with amazing rapidity, and acquired a state of wildness.

On the other hand, it was insisted that, had the fowls come originally from Asia and Africa, and been known to the mediæval poulterers of Southern Europe, they would certainly have attracted the particular attention of writers before the discovery of the New World. For instance, Peter de Crescentis, of the thirteenth century, would not have failed to describe them, as well as pheasants and partridges, in his comprehensive and minute account of the methods of rearing domestic fowls. But not one of all the pre-Columbian writers on

poultry had given a description applicable to the turkey, whose English name—given to the American corn no less than to the American fowls—merely indicated that they had been chiefly imported to this country by the class of merchants who, out of regard to the more ancient and important part of their adventures, were commonly designated *Turkey* merchants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. “Caponos of grease” were only larded capons. As to the daring suggestion that the original turkeys of America were emigrants from Europe, it was observed that, whilst turkeys were found wild in America, it was the only part of the world where they could be found in a state of wildness. It was incredible that after ceasing to be wild in the Eastern lands credited with their origin, they would in a short time recover their primitive wildness, and multiply so rapidly in the New World.

It is worthy of remark in connection with this mistake *from*, and dispute *about*, a name, that the Turkish designation of maize caused some of our Elizabethan ancestors to imagine that Turkey-corn necessarily came from Turkey. Correcting their error, Gerarde says in his chapter on “Turkie-corne”:—“Thes kinds of graine were first brought into Spaine, and then into the other provinces of Europe, not (*as some suppose*) out of Asia Minor,

which is the Turk's dominion, but out of America and the Islands adjoining, as out of Florida, and Virginia and Norembega, where they used to sow it or set it, to make bread of it." It does not appear that any ignorant disputant ever insisted that Turkey corn was first brought to the New World by the European adventurers of the fifteenth century.

But enough of the dispute which closed, as all disputes do in the long run, on the side of truth. The curious may find a concise statement of conflicting arguments in Beckmann's "History of Inventions;" and also a brief summary of the facts, which demonstrate the bird's Transatlantic origin, in Brillat-Savarin's "Physiologie du Goût." At present it is universally allowed that we are not more certainly indebted to China for tea, than to the Western hemisphere for tobacco, turtle, and turkey. Grimod de la Reynière dismissed the discussion by saying playfully, "What matters it whence the Indian pullet came so long as it is tender?"

The American fowl was naturalized in the more civilized countries of Europe at nearly the same time. The orders for the government of Henry the Eighth's household do not mention the bird, but it came to England before that monarch put aside his first wife and broke with the papacy. In Edward

the Sixth's time turkeys ceased to be novelties at the English table, though they were served only at grand feasts. Under Philip and Mary "Turky chicks 4, rated at iiijs. a piece" (*i.e.* about forty shillings of our current money), were served at the banquet which the serjeants-at-law set before the Lords of the Privy Council. That turkey had become comparatively common fare at luxurious boards, by the middle of Elizabeth's reign, may be inferred from Tusser's allusion to the fowl in the "Five Hundred Points of Husbandry."

Whilst the new fowl received in this country a name which caused our ancestors to think it a native of the East, it acquired in France a designation that resulted in the same misconception. Known as Turkey in London, it was called "poulet d'Inde" at Paris, where, at a later date, it was also familiarly called "le Jésuite," in reference to the common belief that the Jesuits first brought poulets d'Inde into France. The evidence is by no means conclusive that the Jesuits performed this service to European gastronomy; but it is certain that, at an early date of the fowl's European history, they were greatly successful turkey-farmers in the neighbourhood of Bourges. Anyhow, it is to the honour of the holy brothers that their name is so agreeably associated with the bird which Europe quickly learnt to prefer to the swan and peacock. Be it also borne in

mind that these reverend patrons of the turkey were long honoured in Protestant England as the original growers of the best wine for weak stomachs, and as the discoverers of the best medicine for restoring an enfeebled body, and enabling it to relish good cheer. Peruvian bark, called cinchona from the Countess del Cinchon, from which quinine is obtained, was long called “Jesuits’ bark” by our physicians, in days when port wine was almost as generally called Jesuits’ port, the Methuen grape being grown chiefly on estates belonging to the Holy Order.

By the way, whilst softening men’s hearts to a sacred brotherhood that has upon the whole been judged with more anger than charity, the turkey is said to have inspired Nicholas Boileau with the animosity which he seized every occasion to exhibit against the Jesuits. The story goes that in his childhood Boileau was running across a court-yard, when he fell upon the stones and exhibited a sensitive part of his person to “a Jesuit” (fowl), that immediately flew at the unfortunate boy and with its beak inflicted serious injury upon him. The sufferer’s cries brought timely help; but he was not rescued from the furious bird until he had received wounds that marked him for life. From that time he could never hear “a Jesuit” mentioned without exhibiting alarm and anger; and on growing to

manhood, in resentment for the wrong done him by their bird, he became the fierce and implacable enemy of the holy brothers.

The poet would have expressed his hatred of the bird more fitly and profitably had he, instead of turning upon its importers with pen and tongue, used his teeth upon every *poulet d'Inde* put at his mercy, and endeavoured to eat its whole species out of existence; but he could never regard a roast or boiled turkey with equanimity. Even to think of one roused his wrath. It was otherwise with the invalid mentioned in the *Almanach des Gourmands*, who made a *trivial* addition to the medical order for his dinner. In accordance with his usual practice towards glutinous convalescents, the physician had ordered *in writing* for this patient's dinner "une cuisse de poulet." Scarcely had the physician taken his departure when the invalid caught up the prescription and, cleverly imitating the physician's hand-writing, added "d'Inde" after "poulet." The draft, thus amended, being duly honoured by his cook, this tamperer with an official document had his reward in a satisfying meal and subsequent laughter at his medical adviser.

The *dindon* has been worshipped in France even more enthusiastically than in England. It figured as the prime delicacy, and also as the *pièce de résistance* in the exemplary dinner which Brillat-

Savarin commemorates as a specimen of good cheer in the time of Louis the Fifteenth. "My only objection to a fine *dindon*," a French gourmand, with powers inferior to his ambition, remarked gravely, "is that when it is cooked I shall not be quite able to eat it all at my solitary dinner." "Why not invite a friend to join you?" the hearer suggested. "Ah, my friend," was the reply, "in that case it would be necessary to order a second *poulet d'Inde*." The old English saying which proclaims the goose a foolish bird for being "too much for one, and not enough for two," is commonly applied in France to the *poulet d'Inde*.

Several French gourmands, however, could be named who, like the French magistrate celebrated in a previous Chapter, regarded the whole of a large turkey stuffed with truffles as no excessive meal for one person. In the spring of his youthful vigour, Masséna's favourite aide-de-camp, General Prosper Sibuet, could eat a fine *dindon* with unqualified enjoyment. Prosper Sibuet was still a sub-lieutenant in his eighteenth year when he entered a restaurant in his native town of Belley—a town of Southern France, famous in gastronomic annals as the birth-place of Brillat-Savarin—just in time to see a magnificent turkey taken from the spit. "By Jove!" exclaimed the young soldier, "I will not leave this table till I have eaten

the whole of that bird myself." "Sir," observed a wealthy farmer who was sitting near, and heard the vow with dissatisfaction, as he had resolved to taste the noble creature, "if you can devour all that is eatable of that prodigious fowl I will pay for it." Prosper went to work without delay. Having taken down a wing in two mouthfuls, he demolished the neck, clearing every scrap of meat from the bones. After a glass of wine, he next disposed of a leg. It was not till the second wing and second leg had passed down the throat of the boyish sub-lieutenant that the farmer, no longer doubting Prosper's ability to accomplish his enterprise, entreated politely, "Sir, since it is clear that I must pay for the fowl, in your courtesy permit me to taste a morsel." So modest a petition, made in a conciliatory tone, conquered the conqueror: "By all means, Sir," he answered, "don't let me disappoint your appetite. Take what remains of the bird. As for me, I will complete my little repast with the other viands." Till the day when he fell gallantly at the passage of the Bober, General Sibuet delighted to recall this incident of his youth, so creditable to his physical vigour and his politeness.

A good story is told of Brillat-Savarin's conscientious desire to render culinary justice to a superb wild turkey which he had the good fortune to kill during his exile in the United States of

America. He was in the company of the diplomatist and statesman, to whom the Americans of the great republic are indebted even more than to Washington for their constitutional privileges, when Jefferson saw in his countenance an air that betokened absence of mind. "Sir," said Jefferson, who had been vainly exerting his wit and marvellous powers of conversation to fascinate his French visitor, "my talk is inopportune. You are thinking." "A thousand pardons," returned the Frenchman, covering his offence with a full apology and a naïve confession, "a thousand pardons for my inattention. I was thinking how I should dress my wild turkey."

Apropos of the French name for the American fowl, the reader should be told that before they agreed to style it "turkey," our ancestors of the sixteenth century often called it "the bird of Inde," or "the Indish pea-cock." The latter term is richly significant, for whilst pointing to the West Indian origin of the fowl, it testifies that the bird on its first introduction to this country was regarded as the rival of the peacock, which in course of time it dethroned and superseded. Harrison speaks of a certain treatment of "turkeys or Indian peacocks" as "a new devise."

The time has come to speak of the goose. But a paragraph at the end of a long Chapter would be

no sufficient notice of a bird so famous in history. No fowl has done more than the goose for human enjoyment, or suffered more from human ingenuity and malignity. At least for once it shall be mentioned with due respect and gratitude in a special Chapter.

CHAPTER V.

GOOSE.

“ Goosie, goosie, gander,
 Where do you wander?
 Up-stairs and down-stairs,
 And in my lady’s chamber.”

OLD NURSERY RHYMES.

“ Yea, poll thyself and prevent others, and give the bailiff or like officer, now a capon, now a pig, now a *goose*, and so to thy landlord likewise, or if thou have a great farm, now a lamb, now a calf.”
 —TYNDALE’s “ EXPOSITION.”

“ So stubble geese, at Michaelmas, are seen
 Upon the spit, *next May* produces green.”

KING’s “ ART OF COOKERY.”

“ The Scottish barnacle, if I might choose,
 That of a worme doth wake a winged goose.”

BISHOP HALL’s “ SATIRES.”

“ Like your Scotch barnacle, now a block,
 Instantly a worm, and presently a great goose.”

MARSTON’s “ MALCONTENT.”

WHEN a nurse amuses the babe in her arms by crying “ Peep-Boh !” she utters the name of a Gothic general, once terrible to women and warriors. Speaking of the dread captain who commanded the hosts of the Persian Chosroes, Gibbon says, “ The name of *Narses* was the formidable sound with which mothers were accustomed to terrify their infants.” In like manner, the name

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My knife & Fork & Draw his cork
and keep you both handy
Each slice of Goose will introduce
A micklefull of bacon “ Macaulay,

of Odin's warlike son, after serving as a rallying cry to armies, whose foes it filled with fear, became a menace of whipping to fractious children. When it had gradually lost this alarming significance, "Boh" was only a jest of nurses, and a signal of mirth to infants. The sound might startle babes into laughing and crowing, but only provoked older nurslings to retort disdainfully, "Cry Boh to a goose!" The child who could speak was as foolish as a goose if "Boh" could alarm him. So long a time has passed since the goose became a by-word for foolishness to the veriest simpletons of human kind.

In his "Dyets Dry Dinner" Buttes calls a goose "the emblem of *meere modestie*," i.e., of modesty without intelligence and grace. Scaliger (Julius Cæsar) styled it "the fairest emblem of prudence," a description directly discordant with its proverbial reputation of unqualified silliness. By the way, the goose is guilty of few acts that justify this unenviable fame. The female bird lays her eggs with propriety, hatches them with decorum, and discharges her parental duties with sufficient fidelity. The male bird does all that society requires of him. If he intrudes himself into chambers where he is no welcome guest, he in this respect only follows the example of ambitious men. The same defence may be offered for other reprehensible habits of geese,

who are notably *human* in their failings. They are no worse than the wisest of animals in liking to have the last word in a dispute; and if they are quick to pursue a flying enemy, and ever ready to retreat from the invader with a bold face, the same may be said of human rabble. To their credit also, much might be said of their services to civilization and learning. By timely cackling they saved the Roman capital from barbarian hordes: and from ancient times to the bright mid-day of modern science they were chiefly instrumental in transmitting the fruits of human intelligence. The wisdom of silent centuries has come to us through the goose-quill; and even in these iron days the steel pen has not altogether superseded the quill. Châteaubriand never used a steel-pen; Victor Hugo is only one of the many living scribes who refuse to adopt the invention of yesterday. In official circles, the pen of steel is regarded with aversion and is seldom seen. Unable to force the new contrivance on reluctant clerks, financial reform can only insist that the quills of our public offices shall be economically cut and re-cut to their stumps by a salaried pen-mender. England is still governed by the goose-quill.

From its appearance rather than its acts, the goose derives its character for foolishness. In the water less stately and imposing than the swan, it is

on land the **awkwardest** and **ungainliest** of feathered creatures. It was said that no one could be so wise as Lord Thurlow looked. No bird can be so foolish as the goose appears when waddling up a turnpike road, or seen with outstretched neck and open beak on a village-green. But there is something human in its graceless aspect and gabbling eloquence. One of our wisest men, Lord Stowell, resembled in a remarkable degree the waddling, cackling goose. Man would have been less disdainful of the bird had he not seen certain aspects of himself in its most ludicrous characteristics.

The fowl, so ungenerously ridiculed by the foolish for its personal defects, has however found friends amongst the learned. Virgil, Scaliger, and De Courchamps are of the number of these nobler spirits. The poet rendered due homage to the birds who saved Rome, by placing on his hero's shield a silver goose with golden wings. With a discretion inferior to his courage, the scholar of the seventeenth century repelled the slanderers of the goose with piquant stories of its sagacity. The vulgar might laugh, because the fowl never sailed under the loftiest bridge without lowering its head lest it should hit the arch ; but Scaliger maintained that this needless caution, instead of showing the goose's foolishness, only demonstrated its *excessive prudence*. But the learned man's grandest illustra-

tion of the wisdom of geese, relates to their precautions against the sharp ears of the eagles of Mount Taurus. On preparing to cross the mountain, each goose of a flock takes in its bill a large stone, and having thus "gagged itself," as the negroes were recently gagged in Jamaica, it goes on its silent way, unable to produce the gabble that would attract the enemy. As for the French biographer and *gourmet*, who flourished in the earlier decades of the present century, indignant at the cruelties perpetrated on defenceless geese by the poulters of Strasbourg, he drew up in their names the petition which implored the peers of France to prohibit the continuance of such atrocities. "Faisant taire les appetances de son estomac sous les cris de sa conscience," the humane author produces an appeal equally powerful and *anserable*. After reciting the processes by which the petitioners were reduced to a state of disease, that was a burlesque of the malady to which their livers were naturally liable, this sublime paper observes,—"Alas! what have we wretched birds done that they should thus blind us, stuff us, torture us? What would you say, noble peers, if any one should devour you, should cut the wings with which you fly so high, should fix you to planks, should nail you to them by your feet, and lastly should pluck out your eyes, in

order to prey on your livers like Prometheus's vulture?"

It is on record that after reading this agonizing prayer from the Strasbourg goose, a French peer, equally celebrated for gastronomic achievement and benevolent enterprise, burst into tears, declaring that he would never again eat the liver of a tortured goose. "And why should I?" he added, when he had overcome the sharpest emotions of compassion, "why should I, since the livers of two Toulouse ducks, treated in the same way, are equal in size and flavour to the largest liver of the Strasbourg goose?" A similar story is told of the English philanthropist, who distinguished himself in the outcry against the barbarities practised on "climbing boys" by the master-chimneysweeps. Having ascertained that a chimney could be well swept by dragging a live goose up it, the reformer wished that the law should make it penal for a sweep to use any other kind of brush to the interior of a chimney. The discovery was original, and the proposal worthy of its maker; but it was objected that method involved some slight cruelty to the goose. "True, poor creature!" observed the humane inventor, "I forgot that. But my *plan* is excellent; and no goose is necessary for its execution. Two ducks would do quite as well."

In justice to the people of Strasbourg, it should be

remembered they were not the first to discover the superior delicacy of the diseased liver of the goose, and to devise means for bringing the organ to the greatest magnitude and highest aggravation of disease. The Strasbourg petitioners only endured such outrages as were, for the same end, imposed on geese by the poulterers of ancient Rome. The modern way of stuffing a goose and duck with a farce-meat of chopt onion and hot spices came also from the same ancient school.

Hatched in the Spring, fed in the yard during Summer, and at the close of harvest sent daily into the stubbles to fill their crops with corn, young geese come to their perfection of size and flavour just in time for the Michaelmas table. They are, in the best sense, *seasonable* at the festal time, when in the ordinary course of things they are, whilst still young and tender, abundant and fleshy. And long before Queen Elizabeth dined off roast goose and Burgundy, under Sir Neville Humfreville's roof, on her way to Tilbury Fort, roast goose was *the seasonable* dish at every good dinner served in England on Michaelmas day. Loving good cheer and eating all good things as soon as they were fairly plentiful and cheap, the English had been Michaelmas-goose-eaters for centuries ere the Spanish Armada was routed and broken to flotsam on their coasts. A fat goose was the

ordinary present every petty tenant brought his landlord on Michaelmas day in the old feudal time, when every person, with dependents from whom he looked at festal seasons for *customary*, and therefore scarcely spontaneous, presents, received their contributions to his larder as matters of course. So far back as the tenth year of Edward the Fourth, John de la Haye, in acknowledgment of his tenure of certain lands, was bound to render to William Barnaby, Lord of Lastres, Co. Hereford, a fat goose for the said lord's dinner on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel. This fact would of itself discredit the absurd story that our practice of eating goose on Michaelmas day had its origin in the dinner which Elizabeth ate at Sir Neville's table, shortly before she received the welcome news of the Armada's destruction. A goose was one of the customary gifts which Tyndale, the reformer, enjoined poor farmers to pay with apparent willingness to their landlords; and at least eighteen years before the Armada sailed to disaster, George Gascoigne wrote,

“ And when the tenauntes come to paie their quarter's rent,
They bring some fowle at Midsummer, a dish of fish in Lent,
At Christmasse a capon, at Michaelmas a goose,
And somewhat else at New Yere's tide, for fear their lease flie
loose.”

That Elizabeth ate goose on the memorable day

of St. Michael is more than probable. Indeed, it is highly improbable that the fowl was absent from the dinner set before her. But instead of establishing a custom by the meal, she merely observed the ancient usage, which gave us the saying, "If you eat goose on Michaelmas day you will never want money all the year round." In reference to this adage, a writer in the *British Apollo* for 1709, says,

Q. "Yet my wife would persuade (as I am a sinner)
To have a fat goose on St. Michael for dinner,
And then all the year round, I pray you would mind it,
I shall not want money—oh ! grant I may find it !
Now several there are that believe this is true,
Yet the reason of this is desired from you.

A. "We think you're so far from the having of more,
That the price of the goose you have less than before :
The custom came up from the tenants presenting
Their landlords with geese, to incline their relenting
On following payments."

Gascoigne's lines show how our ancestors came to think it good policy to be no savers of goose at Michaelmas time. Whilst money came all the year round to tenants and others, who by paying the goose-tax readily kept in the favour of their betters, poverty was seen to befall farmers who lost their leases, and dependents who lost their patrons by omitting to render the customary gift. It followed from this state of things that the man

who would prosper, should think little of the cost of geese at Michaelmas time. He should give them freely at that season to the companions of his table, as well as to higher folk. Rather than grudge the choice viand, it was well for him to eat it prodigally.

Whilst our feudal ancestors ate stubble geese at Michaelmas feasts, they spoke much of a kind of geese called barnacle geese, which were said to be palatable food. John Gerarde, the learned herballist, described this marvellous fowl minutely in the first section (1597) of his famous work on plants. Something bigger than the mallard, and smaller than the common goose, it had “black legs, and bill, and beak, and feathers blacke and white, spotted in such a manner as is our magpie, called in some places a pie-annet.” The Pile of Flounders, a small island on the Lancashire coast, abounded with geese of this description, which were commonly sold in the Lancashire markets for threepence a piece. They were also plentiful in the Orchades, the Isle of Man, and many points of the Irish coasts. They might also be found occasionally, in an imperfect state, on the banks of the Thames; but as sea-water was necessary for their perfect development, the specimens of the barnacle goose (or duck) taken in the Thames may be described as embryonic. Whilst divines debated whether these birds partook so far

of the nature of fish that they might be eaten on fast-days, naturalists (of the highest repute for sagacity *in their time*) questioned whether the perplexing creatures should be rated as fish, fowl, or vegetable. It could not be denied that they had a fishy origin, for they had been seen to proceed from such barnacles as are often found adhering to the bottoms of ships. The barnacle goose was the barnacle in its highest development. But the creature with webbed feet, feathers, and close resemblance to a water-duck could scarcely be ranked with salmon and oysters. Lastly, was it not rather to be regarded as the fruit of a tree?

In the Orcades, Lancashire, Man, and Ireland trees were often seen with branches bending beneath the weight of barnacles, from whose gaping shells came forth fowls that, dropping into the sea, attained their full size in the water. "When it is perfectly formed," Gerarde says of the barnacle, "the shell gapeth open, and the first thing that appeareth is the foresaid lace or string; next come the legs of the bird hanging out, and as it groweth greater it openeth by degrees, till at length it is all come forth, and hangeth only by the bill; in short space after it cometh to full maturitie, and falleth into the sea, where it gathereth feathers, and groweth to maturitie." Under these circumstances, was not the fish-goose so closely allied to the vege-

table kingdom (which had at least provided it with a foster-mother) that it should be named amongst the fruits of plants?" Gerarde answered this question in the affirmative by writing his chapter "Of the Goose-tree, Barnacle-tree, or the Tree bearing Geese"—a chapter which he illustrated with a picture of a goose-tree putting forth a fully-fledged goose. What makes the author's testimony on this subject noteworthy beyond the evidence of other writers about the tree-goose, is his solemn declaration that, instead of writing from hearsay reports, he is giving the results of his personal observance on the Lancashire coast. "But what our eies have seene, and hands have touched, we shall declare."

Gerarde was not the first naturalist to publish a printed description and picture of the British goose-tree. An account of the tree and its progeny may be found in Pena and Lobel's "Stirpium Adversaria Nova," published in London some years before the appearance of Gerarde's "Herbal," which was frankly and with due acknowledgment based upon the "Stirpium Adversaria Nova." Pena and Lobel speak of the bird-barnacles as "Britannicæ Anatiferae," and, instead of magnifying the flocks into geese, are content to call them ducks. It does not appear that they were ever present at the actual birth of a tree-fowl, but they assure us they had eaten one, and found it taste like a duck or wild

goose. “*Sapit nobis editantibus anatem aut anserem sylvestrem.*” Unlike the goose-tree of the later “Herbal,” Pena and Lobel’s duck-tree exhibits no bird in the act of coming from a barnacle still adhering to the wood. On the contrary, the maturing barnacles are seen dropping to the water beneath its branches, whilst the surface of the sea is alive with minutest ducklings. This difference of the two pictures is noteworthy.

Though Gerarde took the greater part of the materials of his “Herbal” from the “*Stirpium Adversaria Nova,*” it does not follow that he derived his knowledge of the fowl-tree from Pena and Lobel. On the contrary, it is highly probable that *they* were indebted to *him* for their notes on the British duck-bearing shells. Gerarde was closely intimate with the Flemish botanist, whose name is perpetuated in the Linnæan term *Lobelia*, and whose death at extreme old age occurred at Highgate so late as the year 1616. The Englishman assisted Lobel in bringing the “*Stirpium Adversaria Nova*” through the press, and at the same time gave him particulars respecting British plants. When Gerarde produced the “Herbal,” founded on Lobel’s work, the latter wrote him a cordial letter of congratulation, containing graceful reference to former kindnesses. From the terms of this hearty, though pedantic, epistle it is obvious that if Gerarde took largely

from the “*Stirpium*,” the Flemish *savan* had on his first arrival in England used his friend’s “collections” with equal freedom.

If Gerarde did not himself enlighten the foreign naturalists respecting the duck-tree, and buy the ducks (barnacle ?) on which they feasted repeatedly, he was at least accountable for the picture of the marvel in their work. As one of the correctors for the press, he sanctioned the illustration, if he did not direct the artist who produced it. A comparison of the earlier sketch and later portraiture enables us, therefore, to see how the goose-marvel grew in the botanist’s imagination. During the interval between 1570 and 1597 his ducks had become geese, and instead of being born on the water, they changed from fish to fowl, whilst still upon the tree.

When they could observe thus loosely, and hasten to such preposterous conclusions, the special investigators of nature needed sorely the admonitions and discipline of the Baconian philosophy.

William Harrison was one of the many shrewd writers who accepted for truth those fables about fish turning to birds, and trees producing fowl. Lobel’s book had been published only some fourteen years and was still regarded as a novelty of literature, when Harrison picked from the keel of a ship

in the Thames a barnacle in which he “saw the proportion of a foule more perfectlie than in all the rest, saving that the head was not yet formed, because the fresh water had killed them all, and thereby hindered the perfection.” He adds, “Certeinely the feathers of the taile hoong out of the shell at least two inches, the wings (almost perfect touching forme) were garded with two shels or sheldes proportioned like the selfe wings, and likewise the brest-bone had the coverture of a shelly substance, and altogether resembling the figure which Lobell and Pena do give in their description of this foule; so that I am now fullie persuaded that it is either the barnacle” (*i.e.*, the sea-fowl, which bore the same name as the shell-fish), “that is ingendered after this manner in these shells, or some other sea-foule to us as yet unknownen.” Elizabethan literature contains many allusions to the barnacle - goose. Hall mentions it in his “*Satires*,” and Marston in the “*Malcontent*.”

But it would be unfair to suggest that the Elizabethan English were universal believers in the goose-tree. Whilst the populace swallowed the fable from sheer ignorance, and many students accepted it out of simple reliance on scientific inquirers like Lobel, the country contained a considerable minority of men whose robust common sense saved

them from the general error. From the terms in which Harrison and Gerarde maintain the Lobelian delusion, it is evident that they anticipated and encountered ridicule for their credulity.

* You would have the impression that the Barnacle goes was first spoken of by Gerarde. It was known centuries before. See Mandeville, Giraldus etc.

CHAPTER VI.

GAME.

"The haunch was a picture for painters to study,
 The fat was so white, and the lean was so ruddy,
 Tho' my stomach was sharp, I could scarce help regretting
 To spoil such a delicate picture by eating."

GOLDSMITH'S "HAUNCH OF VENISON."

"Fesaunt excedeth all fowles in sweetnesse and holsomnesse, and
 is equal to capon in nourishynge. . . . Partryche of all fowles is
 most soonest digested, and heth in hym moch nutriment."—SIR T.
 ELYOT'S "CASTLE OF HELTH."

"Like as a fearefull partridge, that is fledd
 From the sharp hauke which her attacked neare,
 And falls to ground to seek for succor there,
 Where, as the hungry spaniells she does spy,
 Withgreedy jawes her ready for to teare."

SPENSER'S "FAERIE QUEEN."

"The merry brown hares came leaping
 Over the crest of the hill
 Where the clover and corn lay sleeping,
 Under the moonlight still."

CHARLES KINGSLEY'S "BAD SQUIRE."

READERS familiar with Mr. Philip Evelyn Shirley's "English Deer-Parks," a book that should be found in every comprehensive English library, do not need to be reminded that our ancestors of o'den time regarded deer as stock for the table, rather than as creatures for chase, and that they slaughtered them in ways utterly repug-

nant to the feelings of modern sportsmen. Instead of pitting their craft, patience, and bodily endurance against the suspicious timidity of the antlered game, or surpassing its fleetness with horse and hound, they were chiefly studious to kill it under circumstances that left it no chance of escape. Our earliest followers of the noblest creatures ever hunted on English soil were much less sportsmen than pot-hunters, compared with whose murderous arrangements for success in butchery the method of the Hurlingham pigeon-shooters is manly and generous. Long before the Normans introduced the "saltatorium," the Saxons shot buck and doe from the hiding-places of the "haia."

A labyrinth of alleys, cut in a part of the wood to which the deer could be readily driven from the surrounding covert, the deer-hay afforded perfect concealment to the archers who found their indolent pastime in sending bolts at the game that ran along the narrow defiles within a few feet of their cross-bows. The only persons to take any honest exercise in this cowardly chase were the park-keepers and servile foresters, who beat the wood and scared the victims to the scene of slaughter. These servants carried horns and were accompanied by dogs. But whilst the sole function of the hounds was to frighten the deer towards the "haia," the horns were only blown to increase the terror of the

flying herd. When the panic-stricken creatures had run into the haia's chief approaches, which narrowed towards the middle of the labyrinth, the preliminary labour was at an end, and the sport began. The ambushed marksman, who made a fat buck reel and topple over within a yard of his feet, deemed himself a hero. If he missed his aim, he was consoled for a momentary disappointment by remembering that one or more of his hidden comrades would benefit by his misadventure. For the stag there was no retreat, or any escape but death. The haia was full of bowmen; and maddened by the sounding horns and clamorous dogs, the game bounded wildly along the narrowing defiles of the deadly maze until he met the bolt that laid him low. Such was the deer-hay in which the Saxon Thurstan, of pre-Norman time, spent the happiest of his hours.

The Saxon deer-hays discredit the opinion, held by several able antiquaries, that the Normans were the first landholders to surround deer-parks in this country with fences. It is certain that the Normans had for centuries thus kept the game within bounds on their French estates; and it is highly probable that their practice of enclosing parts of their forests for the safe and convenient imprisonment of deer, was derived from those ancient princes of Gaul whose fenced parks are described by Columella.

But though the Normans greatly increased the number of fenced chases in this island, the purpose and arrangements of the Saxon “haia” forbid us to believe that England had no empaled hunting-grounds before the Conquest. Inclosure must have preceded the contrivances for capturing and killing the deer at a certain spot. Without inclosure, the haia would have been ineffectual. In the absence of provisions for keeping an adequate supply of stock in the neighbourhood of the labyrinth, the concealed marksman would have often skulked behind tree or thicket for a whole day without getting a single shot. It is, moreover, incredible that the elaborate device for obtaining at will the barbarous excitement and material profit of a murderous slaughter of the helpless animals, came into fashion immediately after the adoption of inclosures.

There is, however, no doubt that our fenced parks became more and more numerous throughout the Norman period, and that they were maintained in the interests of larder quite as much as for the sake of sport. The empaled chase was the sylvan yard where the lord of a wide demesne preserved the hardy stock, that supplied his table with fresh meat during the seasons when his menial dependents subsisted chiefly on powdered beef and mutton. It was also the yard where he amused himself with butchery. Not content with the excitement of kill-

ing his game-stock in a labyrinth, he seldom neglected to dig a saltatorium in his slaughtering grounds, if he had enough influence to get a special licence to construct one on his premises. The saltatory or deer-leap was a covered pit-fall into which the deer were driven by their sportive followers. It was usually dug at a part of the enclosure where there was free running for the game, and where the treacherous prospect afforded it hopes of escape. Putting forth all its speed, the flying creature would be increasing the distance between its heels and mounted persecutors, when on springing over a line of faggots and straggling furze-bushes, that might be mistaken for a weak point in the chase's boundary, it lighted on treacherous turf, and fell with a crash into the fatal pit. Often the fall was so deep that it broke the legs of the outwitted animal. Anyhow, when a deer had once dropped through the dry sticks and delusive turf of the pit-fall's covering, its running had ended. A minute later the lord of the chase rode up to the margin of the death-pit, and deliberately dispatched his victim with the cross-bow. One of the inquiries ordered by a Court of Swainmote was, "Item, whether any man have any great chase within three miles of the forest, that have any saltories or great gaps, called deer-lopes, to receive deer into them when they be

in chasing, and when they are in them they cannot get out again."

Towards the close of the feudal period, the laws of the chase forbade such brutal expedients for killing deer; but long before the deer-hay and deer-leap had been universally discarded as cowardly and unsportsmanlike contrivances, epicures had begun to question whether venison was not an over-rated viand. Several of our Elizabethan writers condemn its "hardness," and accuse it of "breeding melancholy." Cogan calls it roundly an "unwholesome flesh," and marvels that a meat, so injurious to health and deficient in tenderness, should be "the desire of all foulkes, insomuch that many will rashly venture their credit, yea, and sometimes their lives too, to steale venison when they cannot otherwise come by it." It must, however, be conceded that if young Shakespeare risked credit and life in a raid on Sir Thomas Lucy's deer-park, he only yielded to an appetite that was excusable in the days when the best of butcher's meat was poor stuff, and oxen were seldom sent to the shambles before field-labour had given them thews of steel. Whatever the grounds for thinking him guilty of the crime, the poet must be acquitted of the graver offence—a gastronomic blunder. Lord Everingham says in "Coningsby," "Their breeds of sheep must have been very inferior in old time, as they made such a noise about their

venison. For my part, I consider it a thing as much gone by as tilts and tournaments."

In the times to which this pithy speaker referred, our ancestors, with an abundance of mutton, cannot be strictly said to have had a single breed of sheep. The first principles of the breeders' art were undiscovered, and centuries had still to pass away ere Preston should be justified in boasting, "Only give me time, and I'll give you a sheep with its 'leg' on the 'shoulder.'" Even Lord Everingham, with all his disdain for feudal fare, would admit that before turnip-husbandry and the dawn of the breeder's science, venison surpassed all the commoner meats in flavour and texture.

Whilst Elizabethan epicures and physicians were disparaging venison, they spoke handsomely of pheasant. It exceeded "all foules in sweetnesse and wholesomeness." Cogan calls it "meat for princes and great estates, and for poor scholars when they can get it." One would think more highly of the epicurean discernment of the eulogists of a noble bird, had they not recommended us to stew it with celery, a miserable way of spoiling fine fare that cannot be denounced too warmly, though boiled pheasants and celery are still sometimes seen on the tables of intelligent, albeit whimsical, *gourmets*. Whilst its attractive plumage has disposed gastronomic writers and the multitude to magnify the

considerable virtues of the pheasant, a dusky exterior and insignificant shape have made them reluctant to do full justice to the partridge. Recognizing it civilly, the olden epicure seldom praised the partridge cordially, though it is unquestionably superior to some of the larger and more showy birds that he honoured with emphatic eulogy. There are few table-stories of the bird, whose fame suffers from its mean appearance, in the absence of such extraordinary merits as extort homage under any circumstances. Grimod de la Reynière, however, tells a partridge story that may be given as an illustration of bad manners and worse wit. A Parisian epicure of the First Empire, known in gastronomic circles for his passionate love of partridges, was at a dinner where only two partridges were served for four people. As half a bird was no sufficient supply of his favourite game for the amateur of partridges, he was quick in appropriating the brace under cover of a pleasantry. "Look my friends," he exclaimed, "it is a holy marriage. The one bird is male, the other female. Let no one separate those whom the Lord has joined together." As he spoke, the ruffian put both the birds on his own plate, and had demolished them before his companions could discover the excellence of the jest. Given as a specimen of gastronomic sprightliness, this anecdote is scarcely successful.

Grimod's sense of humour was less fine than his palate.

"My good man," said the Prince Regent, accosting a bearer of game as he walked up St. James's Street with Sheridan, "is that your own *hare* or a *wig*?" The Prince's admirers declared they had never heard him throw off a better pun, and perhaps they spoke the truth. As for the carrier of the game, which had occasioned the *jeu d'esprit*, he was indignant at the unmannerly reference to his artificial locks, and was already inviting the greatest gentleman of Europe to "come out into the street," when the latter assuaged his reasonable anger with a five-shilling piece.

Some seven hundred years before this street scene Martial wrote,

"In aves turdus, si quis me judice certet,
Inter quadrupedes gloria prima lepus.

Of all the birds, the thrush I deem the best,
'Mong quadrupeds, the hare beats all the rest."

In both these opinions the epigrammatist had the hearty concurrence of all contemporary gastronomers. The Romans were prodigious thrush-eaters, spending vast sums on the aviaries (planted with laurels and myrtles, and watered with meandering rivulets), in which they kept thousands of birds whose notes were not more dulcet to the ear than their flesh was sweet to the taste. Fifty years

since it was calculated that the pigeons annually consumed in France amounted to nearly five million pounds' weight of solid flesh. The consumption of thrushes in Ancient Rome was no less astoundingly large. But if the Roman epicure's pulse quickened at the song of the bird which he cooked in half a score ways, his eyes and teeth watered with ecstasy at the smell of hare. He could not name the living quadruped without emotion, and when he spoke of the fascinations imparted to it by cookery, he became poetical. All our modes of cooking the hare are of Roman origin. The Roman stewed it, jugged it, baked it, minced it, potted it, roasted it. But he worshipped the sacred animal most devoutly when it had been stuffed with farce-meat and roasted to a turn.

Throughout the Middle Ages the hare appears to have maintained its ancient reputation for richness and delicacy of flavour. The cooks who followed the instructions of "The Forme of Cury" seldom mixed it with other meats, but preferred to cook it separately, in order that its peculiar taste should not suffer from confusion with other flesh-flavours. This fact is very significant of the esteem in which hare was held at a time when the most incongruous materials were combined in hotch - potches. For "Hares in talbotes," the Forme says, "Take hares and hewe hem to gobettes and seethe hem with the

blode, unwaished, in broth; and whan they buth ynouh, cast them in cold water. Pyke and waishe hem clene. Cole the broth, and drawe thurgh stynnor. Take other blode, and cast in boyling water; seethe it, and drawe it thurgh a stynnor. Take almondes unblanched, waishe hem, and grynde hem, and temper it up with the self-broth. Cast al in a pot. Take oynonns and parboile them, smyte hem small, and cast hem into this pot. Cast thereinne powdor-fort, vynegar, and salt." In the same work appears the following receipt for "Hares in Papdele:" "Take hares, parboile hem in gode broth. Cole the broth, and waisshe the fleysh, cast azeyn to gydre. Take obleys, other wafronns, instede of lozeyns, and cowche in dysshes. Take powdor-douce, and lay on, salt the broth, and lay onoward, and messe forth." On the revival of letters, the hare was honoured by the moderns as cordially as it had ever been honoured by the mediævalists or classic ancients.

Cogan insisted that hare, like venison, was "indigestible and apt to breed melancholy," but he admitted that, whilst epicures devoured it with keen relish, physicians found it of singular efficacy for the cure of several diseases. Mattioli, Maximilian the Second's physician, prescribed hare's liver, dried and reduced to powder, as a specific for derangements of the liver. The same physician used to

bake the whole hare, skin and all, in an oven till it was so completely deprived of moisture that the pestle and mortar could grind the charred flesh to a fine powder, which was deemed a sovereign remedy for such sufferers as in our time seek relief from Sir Henry Thompson. Had Napoleon the Third languished in Elizabethan times of the disorder that killed him in Victorian England, he would have been dieted on raw hare's kidneys, and a porridge of barley-meal and hare's blood. "The gaule of hare," says Cogan, "doth take away flewmes of the eye, and helpeth dimnesse of sight." The stronger hairs of the hare, when burnt, afforded a good powder for staunching the blood of open wounds, and the sufferer from bleeding at the nose was admonished to snuff up his nostrils the soft down plucked from the belly of a leveret. At the same time "the ankle-bone of the foote of an hare," worn as an amulet, was "goode against the cramp." So late as the middle of the last century "Pulvis Leporis" was mentioned respectfully by our writers on pharmacy.

No reader of this page needs to be told that once upon a time Mrs. Glasse wrote a cookery-book for the enlightenment of English housekeepers, and that the learned matron opened her directions for roasting a hare with the famous words, "*First catch your hare.*" But some readers will now learn

for the first time that no Mrs. Glasse ever wrote a manual for English cooks, and a far larger number of readers will hear with surprise that no edition of the cookery-book, published under the *nom de plume* of Mrs. Glasse, contains the proverbial order, "First catch your hare." One is reluctant to demolish a pleasant fiction which has caused merriment for half a century, and reappears from time to time in the leading articles of our best journals, but historic justice requires that the gentlewoman who never lived should be acquitted of the charge of writing the receipt which no one ever penned.

In his witty, but not severely accurate "Art of Dining," Mr. Hayward says, "Mrs. Glasse's book was written by Dr. Hunter." The doctor did no such thing. The culinary treatise of Dr. Hunter, of York, was a very different performance from "Mrs. Glasse's book." No man of his time was more familiar with the secrets of "the trade," of which he was a most respectable member, than Edward Dilly, who is so often mentioned in Boswell's "Johnson." The Brothers Dilly (Edward and Charles) were the booksellers of the Poultry at whose hospitable table Johnson often dined in fit company with wits and scholars. Johnson used to style them his "w worthy friends," and certainly Edward was worthy of credence when, in the hearing of Boswell, Miss Seward, Dr. Mayo, and the

Duke of Bedford's tutor, the Reverend Mr. Beresford, he observed to Dr. Johnson, "Mrs. Glasse's 'Cookery,' which is the best, was written by Dr. Hill. Half the trade know this." Of course Johnson acknowledged the information by questioning its accuracy.

In a career of grievous humiliations and notable successes, the author thus mentioned at a literary dinner-party had plied a facile pen on many subjects. A man of singular energy and some cleverness, he was no less remarkable for the industry that gave him wealth than for the egregious vanity that for more than thirty years made him the mark of satire as spiteful, and of slander as unscrupulous, as his own. Apothecary, actor, pamphleteer, dramatic author, novelist, gossiping journalist, physician, naturalist, and quack-doctor, he considered himself competent to judge every artist, and answer every question. A Jack-at-all-the-scribbling-trades, his enemies styled him Dr. Atall, when, on the strength of a St. Andrew's degree, he styled himself *Dr. Hill*, a title which he relinquished towards the close of his days. Having married Lord Ranelagh's sister, and obtained the Swedish decoration of the Polar Star, he ordered a compliant world to call him Sir John Hill. A volume could be made of anecdotes to his discredit, and of scornful epigrams hurled at him by wits who derided his pretensions,

by men of honour who disdained his untruthfulness, or by Grub Street hacks who hated him for thriving on arts which only yielded them the barest subsistence. At present, few of these pasquinades are remembered by the public, with the exception of the epigram which attributed his death to his own gout-tincture, and the stinging lines in which Garrick expressed an equal contempt for his medicine and dramas,—

“For physic and farces,
His equal there scarce is,
His farces are physic,
His physic a farce is.”

“He used,” Johnson said of Hill, or (as some Boswellian editors suspect) of some other scribe to whom the description could not have been more applicable, “to write anonymous books, and then other books commending those books, in which there was something of rascality.” John Hill was still following the business of an apothecary in St. Martin’s Lane, and had for years been working obscurely in the service of booksellers, when he bethought him to gather together the receipts of half-a-score old cookery-books, and work them up with new phrases and a little new material into a dictionary of food for the use of housekeepers and kitchen-servants.

The enterprise cost him but little labour ; and when

the compilation was ready for the press, he decided to bring it out at his own risk and without the co-operation of a publisher. Instead of selling the work through the book-trade, he would distribute its copies at shops more frequented than book-stalls by the class of women most likely to buy the new treatise. In George the Second's time Mrs. Ashburn kept a flourishing china and glass shop in Fleet Street, which attracted customers from all the most fashionable quarters of the town. For a modest commission—a much smaller percentage than the publishers' allowance to mere book-sellers—Mrs. Ashburn agreed to sell the cookery-book over her counter, and press it upon the ladies who bought her decanters and tea-cups. To catch the ladies who were apt to resent masculine interference in kitchen affairs, the apothecary of letters deemed it prudent to announce on the title-page that the compiler was a lady. Moreover, he had no wish to figure openly in a department of literature beneath his scientific and philosophic dignity. As the author of a cookery-book he would fail to conciliate the Royal Society, to which he hoped to be elected in the course of a few years, through the influence of the Duke of Richmond and Lord Petre, who had already recognised his botanical acquirements and commended him to the chief *savans* of the town.

The book, thus produced at the compiler's risk, without the intervention of a publisher, bore this title-page, "The Art of Cookery made Plain and Easy; which far exceeds anything yet published. By a Lady. Printed for the Author, and sold at Mrs. Ashburn's, a china shop, the corner of Fleet Ditch, 1745." The book was needed, and it was executed with sufficient ability. Together with lots of crockery and glass, it went from Mrs. Ashburn's store to houses in every district of the town. Ladies, who would not have seen it at book-stalls, encountered it in the glass-shop, bought it, and sent their friends to buy it. A second edition was quickly demanded, scarcely more to the delight of Mr. Hill than of Mrs. Ashburn (or Ashburner, as the name is spelt in some of the editions), who, whilst getting more than she had anticipated from her per-centge on the sale, saw that the book was an attraction which filled her rooms with new customers for other wares. The second edition disappeared with equal rapidity. On the appearance of the third edition, the book was announced as the work of "Mrs. Glasse," a *nom de plume* probably suggested by the chief ware of the glass-shop. In due course it was followed by the "Complete Confectioner; or, The Whole Art of Confectionary made Plain and Easy. By H. Glasse, Author of 'The Art of Cookery.' Sold at Mrs. Ashburner's

china-shop, the corner of Fleet Ditch ; at Yewd's hat warehouse, near Somerset House ; at Kirk's toy-shop, in St. Paul's Church-Yard ; and at Dend's toy-shop, facing Arlington Street, Piccadilly." The alteration of the *nom de plume*, by the substitution of the initial letter of *Hill*, may perhaps indicate that the compiler was slightly disposed to avow his production of a work which had become so successful that, besides being accepted as an authority in the best kitchens of the town, it was often given to brides as a wedding present. Subsequent editions came forth with title-pages in which the book was variously assigned to "H. Glasse," "Mrs. Glasse," and "A Lady." When the two works had been floated into a large and increasing circulation through shops, chiefly supported by womankind, they were combined in a grand new edition of "The Art of Cookery," that was sold by "all the principal booksellers of the town."

John Hill is said to have made £1,500 a year by his pen whilst his literary success was at its height, and the prodigious sale of the cookery book, on terms singularly advantageous to the compiler, renders the statement credible. He certainly lived with every appearance of affluence at a time when his writings were his chief, if not his only, sources of emolument. At a later period, having out-

written himself, and lost his hold on readers, he prospered as a seller of "nostrums," driving a showy carriage, keeping two houses, and faring sumptuously to the last.

But no edition of "The Art of Cookery" contains the famous receipt. The story of that receipt arose from a reader's mistake. The directions for roasting a hare in the original edition open with, "Take your hare when it is cased, and make a puddinge, &c." A later edition says, "Take your hare when it is *cased*, truss it in this manner, &c." In the grand edition, with a hundred and fifty new receipts and a copious index, the order also opens with "Take your hare when it is *cased*." The same word is used by the author of "The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth, Commonly called Cromwell," (1664). Directing the cook how to dress a leveret, he says, "Case your leveret," i.e., skin it. Our old writers often call an animal's skin its *case*, and use the same word as a verb with the meaning to "uncase" or "remove the skin." In the "Anatomy of Melancholy," Burton says, "For generally, as with rich furred conies, their *cases* are far better than their bodies, and like the bark of the cinnamon tree, which is dearer than the whole bulk, their outward accoutrements are far more pretious than their inward endowments." In "All's Well that Ends

Well," we read, "We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case him." In the familiar term "case-hardened," *i.e.*, skin-hardened, *case* still retains a signification which, though it has fallen out of use in later time, was a common meaning of the word in the seventeenth, and not a rare one in the earlier half of the eighteenth century.

Ignorant of this meaning of "case," a flippant reader of "The Art of Cookery" regarded it as a misprint for "catched." Having thus improved the text, he imagined, or felt justified in saying, that Mrs. Glasse wrote, "First catch your hare."

CHAPTER VII.

BREAD AND VEGETABLES.

“Kutte with your knyf your brede, and breke yt nouhte.”

THE BABEE’s Book.

“Drinke holsum drinke, and feede þee on liȝt breed.”

A DIATOBIE (A.D. 1430).

“Non fermentatus panis bene corpora nutrit,
Ventrem procurat.”

MODUS CÆNANDI.

“At the same time, at certain seasons of the year, we all appreciate asparagus, cabbages, broccoli, and cauliflowers, and this group of plants contains albumen; but fibrine is the form of the proteinaceous substances from which we derive the largest quantity of our flesh-forming food, and this fibrine is contained in wheat, barley, oats, rye, maize, rice, potatoes, and a great number of other vegetable foods.”—DR. LANKESTER’S “LECTURES ON FOOD.”

IN Elizabethan England the “yield” of good wheat land varied from sixteen to twenty bushels per acre. In the northern parts of the country the yield on a large crop was somewhat less than sixteen bushels, but in the southern counties good farmers of the best land often grew more than twenty bushels. As barley-growers, they were more successful, a good crop of that corn often producing as much as six-and-thirty bushels per acre.

Besides a bread called “miscelin,” in which

wheaten bran was an ingredient, our Elizabethan ancestors made five kinds of wheat-bread :—1. Manchet. 2. Cheat. 3. Raveled cheat. 4. Brown, of the first quality. 5. Brown, of the second quality. Manchet, the bread of the higher tables of aristocratic houses, was made in small loaves that, on leaving the oven, weighed only six ounces each. It was the bread commended by old writers as “white” and “sweet.” Of a “grey or yellowish colour,” cheat—the household bread of superior families—was made of flour, from which the coarsest bran (called gurgeons or pollard) had been taken. Raveled cheat, the usual bread of fairly prosperous citizens, was made of meal, from every bushel of which two-and-twenty pounds of bran had been taken. On leaving the oven, the loaf of raveled cheat weighed sixteen ounces, and was sold in towns in accordance with the sliding-scale of King John’s statute for regulating the price of bread. The better brown was made of the wheaten meal, as it came from the mill, without any abstraction of flour or bran. Inferior brown, having scarcely any flour in it, was made almost entirely of the bran taken from the meal of which manchet and cheat were manufactured. “It was the corn-food,” says Harrison, “appointed in olden time for servants, and slaves, and the inferiour kind of people to feed upon.” To give consistency to

the dry and brittle loaves of the inferior brown, rye-meal was often mixed with the bran-dough, in which case the compound was designated “mischelin.” The Elizabethans had also other breads—black bread, made of rye, barley-bread, oaten-bread, bean-bread, and pea-bread, and breads made of the mixtures of these cheaper kinds of meal. As we have remarked in an earlier chapter, acorns were worked into bread-stuff in times of scarcity, by the most indigent of the Elizabethan populace.

Cogan agreed with most of the doctors of his time in thinking unleavened bread unwholesome, and even threw discredit on “simnels, cracknels, bunnes, wafers, fritters, and pancakes,” as farinaceous foods lacking the ingredient that would have made them digestible. Pastry is regarded with dislike by many valetudinarians, on account of its “richness,” though they will eat plentifully of bread buttered thickly; but their prejudice against a generally innocent preparation originated probably in the old prejudice against unleavened flour-food.

Whilst unleavened bread was generally condemned for unwholesomeness, the author of the “*Modus Cœnandi*” ventured to declare in Latin, which Professor Seeley has Englished, “Bread *not* fermented nourishes the body well; it is good for the stomach,” a fact abundantly demonstrated by the consumers of rice and maize, and those of the

Scotch who live chiefly on unfermented oatmeal. Indeed, modern science has utterly discredited the old denouncers of unleavened bread, which hurts no man, whilst fermented bread, though perfectly wholesome to the majority, has been proved to be very injurious to a small minority of feeders. "On some persons," says Dr. Lankester, "fermented bread acts as a poison." In late years, popular opinion has in more than one of our largest cities declared strongly against the general consumption of fermented bread, as a hurtful preparation; and processes—those of Dr. Whiting and Dr. Dauglish—have been invented for vesiculating bread-stuff without the aid of fermentation. Whilst Dr. Whiting's method achieves its end by putting carbonate of soda into the flour, and hydrochloric acid into the water, used for the manufacture of bread, Dr. Dauglish's "patent" forces water charged with carbonic acid gas into the flour, the two ingredients being rapidly mixed by the aid of steam in a manner that dispenses with the laborious process of kneading. One of the *fanciful* objections to bread made with yeast arises from the fact that it contains the smallest conceivable amount of the alcohol, formed by the fermentation of that portion of the starch which is converted into glucose. But the amount of alcohol in yeast-bread is so trivial, that the tee-totaler may eat the old-fashioned food with an easy

conscience. Some years since, when an unsuccessful company worked a process for catching the alcohol evolved from fermented bread whilst in the oven, its method was misrepresented to the populace as a nefarious plan for *extracting* alcohol from bread, and so depriving the consumer of a certain quantity of spirit. "Bread sold here with the gin in it," was the announcement placarded at the bakers' shops that opposed most vigorously this insidious attempt to "rob a poor man"—of his gin.

By the way, whilst Yorkshire is glorious for its baked batter puddings, East Anglia is famous for two kinds of farinaceous food that may be rated as breads. The *heavy* Suffolk dumpling is unleavened, and the *light* Norfolk dumpling is leavened, bread, cooked in the boiler instead of the oven. In his "Grand Dictionnaire," Alexandre Dumas makes a droll mistake, where he says, "*Dumpling de Norfolk.* Ce mets qui a l'honneur de devoir son nom au duc de Norfolk, lequel l'affectionnait beaucoup, se fait de la façon suivante ; vous mettez dans une pâte un peu épaisse un grand verre de lait, deux œufs et un peu de sel, faites la cuire deux ou trois minutes dans de l'eau bien bouillante, jetez égoutter sur un tamis, et servez avec du beurre frais un peu salé."

Perhaps no gastronomic writer ever made a droller blunder than this account of the Norfolk dumpling, which only differs from the Suffolk

“damper” in being made with yeast. Of course, the yeast dumpling swells greatly in boiling, a fact that has occasioned comical mishaps. Many years since, when Monsieur de Rouillon, a French émigré of ancient nobility, had just settled at Norwich, where he was for many years an eminent Professor of French, his young bride decided to give him the provincial dumpling for his dinner. In her ignorance of the creature’s habit, and in the absence of a larger boiler in her poorly furnished kitchen, Madame boiled her dumpling in a big kettle, from which it could be only extracted by means of a Cæsarian operation.

Though rye-bread was thought hurtful to weak stomachs, the author of “The Haven of Health” says it was much eaten in the rural districts; and he observes that familiar experience in Lancashire, Cheshire, Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Cornwall contradicts Galen’s assertion that oats, though fit for beasts, were no fit diet for men. Cogan, by the way, recommends dyspeptical persons to spice their breads with caraway and fennel seeds. Hence, it appears, the inventor of the Abernethy biscuit had Elizabethan authority for the medicinal ingredient of his unleavened cake.

Though the Old English were poorly supplied with vegetables, their destitution in this respect was far less complete than several historians have repre-

sented. Harrison was not without grounds for his opinion that horticulture languished during the century following Henry the Fourth's accession. The civil convulsions, which repressed literature and impoverished every order of men, were highly prejudicial to the luxurious and refining pursuits. Not more injurious to the families which joined in the universal strife, than to the art which furnished the contestants with the fairest emblems of their mutual enmity, the Wars of *Roses* deprived manners of their civility, and robbed the soil of all labour that was not requisite for the production of the bare necessities of life. Rudeness invaded the table, and weeds covered the gardens, which had been prolific of the choicer fruits and vegetables mentioned in the "Forme of Cury." But even in the hardest times of the fifteenth century our ancestors had their watercresses and rampions, their rapes and turnip-tops, their dandelions and common spinaches, their coarse gourds and cabbages, and the dozens of wild herbs which, though they fell into disesteem soon after the introduction of the American potato and Italian broccoli, were long valued as wholesome and palatable materials for the pot. It is absurd to infer from the loose statements of careless writers, that the chief lady of Henry the Eighth's England could not get a mess of green esculents without sending to Antwerp or

Rotterdam for them. Yet the sceptical Hume could on no better authority assert, “It was not till the end of the reign of Henry the Eighth that any salads, carrots, turnips, or other edible roots were produced in England ; the little of these vegetables that were used was imported from Holland and Flanders. Queen Catherine, when she wanted a salad, was obliged to send a messenger thither on purpose.” The tradition, accepted thus literally and used so strangely by the historian, may have originated in the fact that, in the dearth of certain materials for a salad, and in the absence of some new vegetables, the royal lady imported from the Low Countries a supply of herbs and roots for plantation in her gardens. Such a circumstance would have afforded a smart talker the occasion for declaring that her Highness, unable to pick a salad in all England, was compelled to send across the sea for one. But it is preposterous to imagine that she was ever in such straits for a dish of green meat as Hume would have us think.

The tastes and habits of the table are not quickly formed by an entire people. In Elizabeth’s time our ancestors’ fondness for vegetables amounted almost to a passion, and caused them to welcome every addition to their supply of roots and herbal esculents. The alacrity with which they adopted the American tuber, which, in course of time, pro-

duced deplorable results in the history of Ireland, is significant of a gastronomic preference that could not have developed itself in some sixty years. Eleven years had not elapsed since Raleigh's adventurers brought our first potatoes from Virginia before they were commonly grown and eaten in this country. In 1697, Gerarde could write of potatoes as familiar fare. At the same time our forefathers ate tulip-roots (dressed with sugar), radishes, pumpkins, artichokes, Jerusalem artichokes, fourteen kinds of colewort, "including the colie-flore or cole-flore, and the great ordinarie cabbage, commonly eaten all over this kingdome," Peruvian potatoes, Virginian potatoes, cucumbers, carrots, parsnips, turnips, broccoli, beet, asparagus, onions, together with other good vegetables. They had also their lettuces, spinaches, cresses, and a score other esculent leaves for hot and cold salads, of which further mention will be made. Whatever the dearth of vegetables in Henry's time, it had completely disappeared in Elizabeth's days.

Cogan thought radishes "unwholesome any way," but he records that they were eaten largely by his countrymen, as a sauce, with roast mutton and other meats. Gerarde observes that they may be eaten raw with bread. The precise way in which Curius Dentatus dressed them in the presence of the Samnite ambassadors, is one of those facts

about which history is silent. Probably the frugal Roman was preparing them with oil, and would not have addressed the embassy with so rough a tongue, had he first smoothed it with the mess. Speaking of parsnips and carrots, Cogan tells us to boil and butter them, “especially parsnips.” The Elizabethan housekeeper who grudged butter for the parsnips which she set before her guests, gained an ill name. However smooth her tongue, she could not palliate her parsimony with pleasant speeches. “Apologies,” says the Elizabethan adage, “won’t butter parsnips.” Potatoes were also dressed profusely with butter. Cucumber has an ill name for indigestibility; but whilst Cogan, ever quick to discover unwholesomeness in food, recommends us to sauce our mutton in the Summer with peppered slices of the fruit, Gerarde extols cucumber pottage, thickened with oatmeal, as a remedial diet for persons afflicted with “flegme and copper-faces, red and shining fierie noses (as red as red roses), with pimples, puckles, rubies, and such-like precious faces.”

The English have at all times been large consumers of pulse. The compilers of the “Forme of Cury” used beans and peas, new and old, in their soups and hotch-potches; and in later times the demand for early peas in the London market caused them to be sold at prices that scandalized

careful housekeepers. In the middle of the seventeenth century the keeper of an eating-house, near the Savoy, offered ten shillings for a peck and a half of green peas (unshelled), which a poor woman was carrying to the Protector Cromwell's lady, in the hope that she would receive a much larger sum for the first fruits of her pea-garden. The poor woman was disappointed. Elizabeth Cromwell had a passion for new peas; but, like a dame of inferior degree and more recent time, she was frugal, even when bent on pleasure. Accepting the "present," Mistress Cromwell sent the "giver" a crown-piece, which the latter indignantly declined to accept. A lively dispute ensued between the lady's-maid and the market-woman, which ended in the restoration of the peas, that were forthwith sold for an angel in the Strand. "And so," says the author of Elizabeth Cromwell's "Court and Kitchen" (1664), "half-slightingly, and half-ashamedly, this great lady returns the present, putting it off with a censure upon the unsatisfactory dantinesse of luxurious and prodigal epicurisme. The very same were afterwards sold by the woman to the said cook, who is yet alive to justify the truth of this relation." What stronger evidence of the story's truth can be required by the impartial reader?

Following an Apician precept, our ancestors

brightened the greenness of their young peas by boiling them in water strongly seasoned with salt-petre. Albert Smith, in one of his jest-books, advised the cook who would give her peas a fine colour to send them to Hammersmith, for that was the way to Turnham Green; a flippancy, by-the-by, for which Albert was indebted to Oliver Goldsmith, who gave the same order for the treatment of pickles.

Not more delicious to the palate, than hateful for the smell which it imparts to the breath, the onion has always been a source of doubt and difficulty to the fastidious epicure. Whether he regards leek or chive, garlic or shallot, onion or scallion, he vacillates between love and detestation, and doubts whether he should bless or curse a thing so exquisite in fruition, and execrable in consequences. His usual course is to humour his appetite, and then to avoid the ladies, till he has paid the full penalty of indulgence. It is so now; and was so in ancient Rome. Martial wrote,

“ *Fila Tarentini graviter redolentia porri,
Edisti quoties, oscula clausa dato.*”

“ *The juice of leeks who fondly sips,
To kiss the fair must close his lips.*”

Brummell the Beau, who once ate a pea, was once present at a vehement disputation on the delicate

question, whether a gentleman might eat onions immediately before going into the company of gentlewomen. The discussion took place at a time when the “Sublime Steaks” were in their palmiest days, and the feebler dandies wanted courage to decry the strong-smelling bulbs beloved by beef-eaters. Brummell at first kept silence, only evincing his disgust at the vulgar topic by expressive grimaces; but on being pressed for his opinion, he remarked sententiously, “No man is so well-looking and fascinating that, on entering a ball-room, he can afford to handicap himself with a stink.”

For centuries the English epicure had been satisfied with the small and comparatively flavourless onion of his native soil, when his happiness was enlarged by the introduction of the far finer bulb of France. This momentous event in our gastronomic annals was attended with humorous circumstances. Corbière, the French naval novelist, was staying at the small port of Roscoff when he received a visit from a compatriot, whom he had never seen before, and who entered his presence without any letter of introduction. A sea-faring man, he had a title to M. Corbière’s sympathy. He was also a merchant-adventurer, who combined the tradesman’s shrewdness with the sailor’s frankness. His brow betokened intelligence and courage, whilst his

Herculean stature and vast shoulders afforded a spectacle that stirred his beholder's heart with patriotic emotion. To M. Corbière's inquiry for his visitor's purpose, the man answered, "Sir, I am about to make a voyage on important business to London, where I shall find myself in a land of whose language I am entirely ignorant. In order that I may transact my affairs, tell me the English of these words, 'L'oignon Anglais n'est pas bon.' "

"Surely I will do so. In English they are 'The English onion is not good.'" To impress them fully on his visitor's mind, M. Corbière repeated the words several times.

"Sir," entreated the Roscovite, "have the great goodness to write them on a slip of paper."

When M. Corbière had done so the man of sea and commerce took his writing and his departure. A week later the stupendous man and small adventurer was in the port of London, with his boat laden with French onions. On the following day he took his stand at a corner of Covent Garden Market amidst goodly piles of his best bulbs, over which was exhibited a placard bearing the words, "The English Onion Is Not Good." A crowd quickly gathered round the foreigner, who, to all remarks thrown at him, replied with equal good temper and gravity, "De Inglees on-i-on ees not good." This steadily reiterated announcement provoked the

anger, without lessening the curiosity of a crowd, more remarkable for prejudice against foreigners than for courtesy to anyone. "What do you mean, you parlez-vooing thief? Do you mean to insult England?" exclaimed a furious costermonger, who again received the reply, "De Ingleses on-i-on ees not good." "Do you want to fight?" roared the orator of an affronted people. Again, for the hundredth time, came the answer, "De Ingleses on-i-on ees not good." "Look here," screamed the costermonger, "parlez-voo in that way again, and I'll give you more Ingleses on-i-on than you'll stomach. Do you hear, Froggy?" Bent on making himself intelligible to a dull people, the Roscovite began to say once more "De Ingleses on-i——" when the costermonger ran in upon him. In an instant the assailant was caught by the elbow, and sent spinning round and round like a top. The hum of riot and street-fight arose. Maddened by the repulse which he had endured, the costermonger rushed on his prodigious foe, who raised him in his arms, and then threw him flat on the ground, face and belly downwards. A yell rose from all the spectators, some of whom had enough French to inform the Roscovite that in England he must throw his man on the back and shoulders, with face upwards. Returning to the attack, the Englishman sprung at the traducer of the British onion, when he was

again caught up and thrown, but this time on his shoulders, according to the insular “règles de la lutte.” When the same feat had been repeated till the assailant cried “Enough, enough!” there arose “hourras!” and “les bravos!” from the English spectators, who, after the wont of their countrymen, could appreciate merit demonstrated thus cogently by physical force. In their delight with the gallant Roscovite, they were about to carry him in triumph round the “Garden,” when he exclaimed in French, “Not so, not so. While you are carrying me in triumph you will steal my onions.” On learning his apprehension, through an interpreter, the by-standers put an end to the hero’s suspicions by buying all his onions at his own price; and then they “chaired him” and “cheered him” round the market. From that day the English market has been open to French onions, forty cargoes of which are annually sent to London from the single port of Roscoff. Does the reader question the historic accuracy of this story? He will dismiss the ungenerous doubt on learning that the anecdote is given on the authority of Alexandre Dumas. An unfortunate fact for this story, and the credit of M. Dumas, is that onions were largely imported to this country from France and Spain in the seventeenth century. In his “Acetaria; A Discourse of Sallets,” John Evelyn says of onions, “The best are

such as are brought us out of Spain, whence they of St. Omers had them, and some that have weighed eight pounds."

Whatever the defects of the English onion, it is universally conceded that our mushrooms are good when gathered with care and treated skilfully. Nor can it be questioned that they were largely eaten by our ancestors of the Roman period, who adopted the cuisine of their conquerors. To die of bad mushrooms is not an heroic way of quitting life, but it was through a dish of poisonous fungi, administered treacherously by his niece and fourth wife, Agrippina, that the Emperor Claudius went to the unseen world. What troubled the Roman wits chiefly in this affair was their inability to discover, for their own safety and the good of all epicures, the particular species of fungus that killed this wearer of the purple. Similar "accidents" may have decided our mediæval ancestors to relinquish a practice taken from the Romans, and, in their inability to distinguish clearly between good and noxious fungi, to neglect the mushroom altogether. Anyhow, our edible fungi were regarded with wholesome suspicion, if not with universal abhorrence, in the earlier part of our Tudor time, and the fashion of eating them did not revive till that period was drawing to a close. After glancing at the new vegetables of his day, Harrison says of their eaters,

“Neither doo they now staie with such of these fruits as are wholesome in their kinds, but adventure further upon such as are verie dangerous and hurtful as the verangenes, mushrooms, &c.” In the middle of the following century Edmund Gayton wrote against mushrooms,

“ Pepper and oyl and salt, nay all cook’s art,
Can no way wholesomeness to them impart,
What Dr. Butler said of the cucumber,
Of these ground-bucklers we the same aver,
Dress them with care, then to the dung-hill throw ‘um,
A hog won’t touch ‘um if he rightly knowe ‘um !”

Dr. Glynn of Cambridge—a far later medical celebrity than Dr. Butler—used to say that to be rightly dressed, a cucumber should be sliced into very thin slices, sprinkled with the finest oil, peppered plentifully, covered fairly with vinegar, and then—thrown out of the window. But the pleasantry, with which the Cambridge physician has been credited in medical “ana,” was at best only a curious refinement on Dr. Butler’s order to the same end.

The Duke of Newcastle, whose fame has been rendered ludicrous to all posterity by Horace Walpole’s pen, was liable to panics; and, in a sudden alarm about mushrooms, he issued an order that Gayton would have cordially approved, for the immediate and complete destruction of all mushrooms

and toadstools, and all other fungi whatsoever discoverable in Claremont Park. His incomparable cook, Chloe, went nearly mad at the prompt and thorough execution of this whimsical ukase. "Poor Dr. Shaw," says the malicious Walpole, mistelling the story, partly out of carelessness, but chiefly with the design of rendering the Duke more ridiculous, "being sent for in great haste to Claremont (it seems the Duchess had caught a violent cold by a hair of her whisker getting up her nose, and making her sneeze), the poor Doctor, I say, having eaten a few mushrooms before he set out, was taken so ill that he was forced to stop at Kingston, and, being carried to the first apothecary's, prescribed a medicine for himself which immediately cured him. This catastrophe so alarmed the Duke of Newcastle that he immediately ordered all the mushroom-beds to be destroyed, and even the toadstools in the park did not escape scalping in this general measure. And a voice of lamentation was heard at Ramah in Claremont—'Chloe' weeping for her mushrooms, and they are not." Instead of eating them before the journey from town to Claremont, Dr. Shaw took the mushrooms which caused his indisposition immediately before the homeward journey. The meal that occasioned the physician's attack was eaten under the Duke's roof, and Chloe's mushroom-beds were destroyed because there was conclusive proof

that some of her mushrooms had done the mischief. His Grace was not a wise man, but he was not so foolish as to demolish his own mushrooms because the doctor had eaten some indigestible fungi in London.

Gayton made a trip in saying that a hog would decline to eat mushrooms, "if he rightly knew them." The gluttonous propensities, always conspicuous in pigs, are combined with a considerable discernment of flavours, that comes into operation as soon as the animals are in position to choose their own food and eat daintily. Unclean beasts, able to relish anything, they also exhibit strong gastronomic preferences; and they devour the more delicate and odorous of the fungoid growths with an avidity which goes some way to prove their kinship to epicures of our own species. With his delicate nerves of smell, the hog is no less quick and sure than the truffle-terrier in detecting the scent of the subterranean truffle; and in some districts he guides the truffle-hunter to the delicacy which Brillat-Savarin justly styled "le diamant de la cuisine."

This elegant tribute to the virtues of the truffle should not be mentioned without a passing allusion to the baneful properties of the esculent which has been known to destroy abruptly those whom it has fascinated for a few brief minutes. Even as a youth with weak lungs should refrain from the

violent excitement of rowing, the epicure of weak stomach should avoid the perilous delight of the truffle-gourmand. Together with many votaries the truffle has had several victims. If Claudius died of mushrooms, it must be recorded of the Duc d'Escars, Louis the Eighteenth's superb Grand-Maître d'Hôtel, that he was killed by *truffes à la purée d'ortolans*. The duke and his royal master had laboured, and enjoyed their labour's proper reward, for several hours in that strict privacy which often guarded their gastronomic inquiries and pleasures from vulgar observation. With their own hands they had prepared the fatal compound; and having eaten it with unqualified satisfaction, they had retired to rest with easy consciences. A few hours later, Louis le Désiré was roused from his tranquil slumber to be informed that his faithful *maître-d'hôtel* was already in the arms of death. The expiring duke had despatched a timely warning to his master, in order that the King might avoid disaster by prompt measures. Betraying an heroic conviction of his own safety, and a royal freedom from emotional weakness, the sovereign observed, “Dying! and of my *truffes à la purée*? Poor man! Then he sees I did him no injustice. I always said I had the better stomach of the two.”

No vegetable is at the same time so fruitful of delight and so innocuous as asparagus—the Aspara-

gus Sativus of botanists, and “the grass” or “sparrow-grass” of the London fruiterers. The only discordant note that disturbs the music of its harmonious story comes from the controversy whether its tender heads should be dressed with oil or butter. Fontenelle and the Abbé Terrasson were close friends to the last; but to the last they differed on this important point, Fontenelle insisting on oil, and Terrasson declaring no less firmly for butter. One day the Abbé dropt in to dine with the poet, when the latter had just received a superb basket of asparagus. With proper regard for his friend’s taste, and a noble sacrifice of his own feelings, the poet ordered his cook to dress one half of the asparagus with butter, and the rest with oil. This direction having been given, the friends composed themselves for chat till the repast should be served. Half-an-hour later, when the Abbé was in the act of uttering a pleasantry, he fell back in his chair, and died instantly of a stroke of apoplexy. With admirable presence of mind, before he despatched his valet for a physician, Fontenelle opened the door of his cabinet and called to his cook, “*Tout à l’huile maintenant; tout à l’huile,*”—“All with oil, now; all with oil.”

Fontenelle and the advocates of oil had ancient usage on their side. Terrasson was the champion of a novelty. In Elizabethan England, asparagus

when served separately, was always dressed with oil. In "The Herbal," John Gerarde says of this vegetable, "It is named asparagus, of the excellency, because asparagi doth properly signify the first spring or sprout of every plant, especially when it is tender, and before it do grow into an hard stalk, as are the buds, or young springs of wild vine or hops, or such like." Richardson doubts whether he should agree with Varro in thinking the word a derivative "ex *asperis* virgultis," or with Lennep, who derived it from "*a* priv. and *σπαρασσειν*, to tear to pieces." Gerarde goes on to say, "The first sprouts and tender shoots hereof be oftentimes sodden in flesh-broth and eaten; or boiled in faire water, and seasoned with oil, vinegar, and pepper, they are served up as a salad." But such large asparagus—with thick, stringy stalks, and heads bigger than filbert-nuts,—as is now-a-days sold in every fruiterer's shop during the season for the vegetable, was unknown in Elizabethan times. "Manured or garden sperage," says Gerarde, "hath at his first rising out of the ground thicke tender shoots, very soft and brittle, of the thickness of the greatest swan's quill, in taste like the green bean, have at top a certain scaly soft bud." And so long as the finest asparagus sticks were no larger than swan's quills, our ancestors ate the stalks (*green* in

those days) as well as the heads of the tender vegetable.

The practice of setting asparagus deep in the soil of highly-earthed beds, and subsequently covering the beds with dry litter,—a practice which, without improving the flavour, changed so greatly the outward appearance of the growth,—became general in the early years of the eighteenth century. The date of this horticultural change can be fixed with sufficient exactness by some pleasant anecdotes.

Smarting under adverse circumstances and real or imaginary indignities, which wrought permanent injury to his moral nature, young Jonathan Swift was acting as Sir William Temple's private secretary when he encountered William the Third at Moorpark. Whilst Sir William was confined to his bed with gout, the sovereign inspected his host's beautiful gardens, and graciously taught the poor scholar, who officiated as his guide round the grounds, "how to cut asparagus in the Dutch way." Swift had occasion also to see the king eat asparagus.

More than half-a-century had passed since this meeting of the great king and the great humourist, and Swift, who died in 1745, was lying in his grave in St. Patrick's Cathedral, when Leland, the historian, and George Faulkner, the Dublin alderman and bookseller, met at a dinner-table where the talk turned on the famous Dean. During this gossip

Faulkner, who had repeatedly printed and published for Swift, recalled an occasion when he had dined at the Dean's table in his deanery. The publisher having been detained for some time at the deanery on business connected with some proof-sheets, the man of letters had pressed him to dine with him *tête-à-tête*. Asparagus was one of the vegetables at the repast; and when the guest asked for a second helping of the fare, the frugal host, pointing to the applicant's plate, observed, "Sir, first finish what you have upon your plate." "What, Sir?" answered the man of business, "eat my stalks?" "Ay, Sir," the Dean responded in his most imperious manner; "eat your stalks, or you will have no more. King William always ate his stalks." Whereupon the man of business, yielding to a will stronger than his own, ate his stalks submissively, whilst his cynical host doubtless chuckled secretly at another exhibition of a free-man's servility. "And George," exclaimed Leland with astonishment, when Faulkner had given this illustration of Swift's insolence and his own meekness, "what! were you really blockhead enough to obey him?" "Yes," Faulkner replied, bridling up and flushing angrily, "and, Doctor, if you had dined with Dean Swift *tête-à-tête*, faith, you would have been obliged to eat your stalks too!"

Sir Walter Scott tript in saying that William the

Third taught Swift “how to eat the vegetables with Dutch economy,” implying thereby that the slender green stalks eaten by the king were no daintier meat than such thick stringy stalks as the novelist’s readers habitually put aside. The fact is, whilst little inferior in texture, the lower part of the green stalk is even superior in flavour to the head of the vegetable, when grown in the old fashion. A chronic invalid always under medical care, even when he fought his battles, William of Orange was not likely to load his stomach with a lot of indigestible white stalks. But new horticulture had made asparagus-stalks uneatable, before a load of them was forced down his obsequious publisher’s throat by the whimsical misanthrope, whose biography abounds with instances of the morbid delight he took in putting outrageous affronts on his social inferiors, and seeing to what depths of self-humiliation he could goad them.

The literature of gastronomy affords at least a score of apocryphal, and extremely improbable asparagus stories, which make fun of persons so simple as to imagine that the white stalks were the eatable part of a dish of asparagus. One tells how “a wag” (that supreme social nuisance of our Georgian period), sitting down with a “countryman” to a plate of asparagus, said, “Come, I am not hungry, so I’ll cut, and you shall choose,” dividing

with his knife, as he spoke, the heads from the stalks. Of course the simple and greedy "countryman" seized the larger portion. Another tells how a bundle of the new (!) vegetable was sent in George the Third's time from London to a "country" lady, who was cautioned in a note to "cut off the heads and throw away what was uneatable." Misconstruing the instructions, the old-fashioned matron threw away the heads, and nearly killed herself by eating the stalks. A third anecdote certifies that a worthy woman of the same recent period, living in the heart of Somersetshire, chopped up several pounds of the stringy stalks, dressed them with melted butter and pepper, and then, having eaten them, observed that "she did not think much of the *new* vegetable." The originators of such tales were drolly ignorant of the plant's history. A vegetable, commonly grown in our Elizabethan gardens, can have been no novelty to our rudest housekeepers of Georgian times. It is not likely that "country" people were less ignorant of the "grass" than town-folk. And even whilst the modern way of growing it was a novelty, the rustic gourmand cannot have needed instruction that the green head was more agreeable than the white stalk.

Far different from these foolish anecdotes is the story told by Brillat-Savarin of the asparagus that raised its head once upon a time in the garden of

Monseigneur Courtois de Quincey, Bishop of Belley. The Bishop was extremely fond of the vegetable, and evinced significant delight on hearing that a head of unusual size had appeared just above the surface of his asparagus-bed. To ascertain the truth of the news, the most reverend Monseigneur hastened, with a party of familiar friends, to the spot where this marvel could be seen. The report was true. The delicately-painted and shining head was wonderfully large. A new animation pervaded the Bishop's residence. His superb head of asparagus was the talk of all Belley and the surrounding country. Day after day he visited it with his guests, marking its gradual ascent from the bed. At last the moment arrived when, in the presence of a dozen agitated spectators, the Bishop, knife in hand, stooped and put the blade's edge to the delicate production. Alas ! the knife could not cut it. The vegetable was a thing of wood, which some malicious mechanician had carved, painted, and planted. Amongst the witnesses of this comical scene was the Canon Rosset, the irrepressible smile of whose humorous face betrayed that he was the perpetrator of the jest. After the lapse of two generations this ludicrous incident afforded a Parisian confectioner the suggestion for those imitations of asparagus, in cream-ice and water-ice, that are sometimes served at London dinner-tables.

When Brillat-Savarin expressed his surprise to Madame Chevet, of the Palais Royal, that she could find purchasers of asparagus at the price of forty francs a bundle, and presumed that such costly luxuries went only to the king's palace or the hotels of princes, she told the epicure he was in error, and enlightened him with piquant words. Princes would buy the *beautiful*, but they were slow to spend money on the *magnificent*. Her costliest dainties were consumed by private persons, and left her hands more quickly than cheaper goods. Even whilst she spoke, Paris contained some three hundred men of money—financiers, capitalists, contractors—confined to their rooms by gout, fear of cold, the doctor's orders, and other causes, which did not prevent them from eating. Sitting over his fire, each one of these was racking his brain to imagine the delicacy most fit to revive his jaded appetite, and, after wearying himself with vain endeavours to settle the question, would send out his valet to make observations. The valet would visit her window, see the parcel of asparagus at forty francs, and return with an account of its magnificence. Ten minutes later it would be sold at full price. Or a newly-married husband, passing the shop with his “*jolie petite femme*” on his arm, would buy the bundle at her request. Anyhow, the thing being rare and highly expensive, it would be sold to some

one. The epicure was still gossiping with Madame Chevet, when two stout Englishmen rolled up to the shop, saw the prize, and desired it. Another minute had not passed before one of the islanders had paid his forty francs, put the bundle under his arm, and carried it off, singing triumphantly his national anthem, “sifflant l’air, God save the king.” What a patriotic fellow was “the Englishman abroad,” some fifty years since, that he could not buy a bundle of asparagus without praying for his sovereign’s safety, or a basket of peaches without humming “Rule Britannia!” Now-a-days he would buy the whole of the Palais Royal without condescending to hum even an opera air.

Madame Chevet’s evidence respecting the Paris of her time might be applied to the London of to-day. The social explorer would not find our most luxurious tables in the houses of our princes. In England, the lavish epicure is more often a man of the people than of the *noblesse*. When difficulties were rapidly growing upon him and stopping the road to preferment, Serjeant Wilkins—that best of advocates for a common jury in a horse-case—thought nothing of a couple of guineas for a luncheon to his taste. And having eaten at his midday repast a couple of bundles of asparagus, at half-a-guinea a bundle, he would qualify this “food for the brain” by drinking a pint or two of heavy

London stout, to bring his intellect down to the level of the British jury. In "The Princess Clarisse," one of Mr. Mortimer Collins's clever novels, Sir Clare says, "Liebig, or some other scientist, maintains that asparagein, the alkaloid in asparagus, develops form in the human brain; so if you get hold of an artistic child and give it plenty of asparagus, it will develop into a Rafaelle."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SALAD.

A good salad is the prologue to a bad supper.
He would live for aye must eat sallet in May,
A fool can pick a sallet as well as a wiser man.

ENGLISH PROVERBS.

"Four persons are wanted to make a good salad, a spendthrift for oil, a miser for vinegar, a counsellor for salt, and a madman to stir all up."—SPANISH PROVERB.

"Lettuse is much used in salets in the sommer tyme with vinegar, oyle, and sugar and salt, and is formed to procure appetite for meate, and to temper the heate of the stomach and liver."—COGAN'S "HAVEN OF HEALTH."

TOWARDS the close of a long and honourable life, John Evelyn produced the "Acetaria: a Discourse of Sallets," which he dedicated to Lord Chancellor Somers. The subject, which the diarist treated in a separate work, demands at least a chapter in this survey of the English table.

The Romans were great salad-eaters, and in the "De Opsoniis" may be found brief directions for the sauces proper for their common salads. In default of lettuces, they ate endives (flavoured with finely minced onion), which they dressed in the spring with liquamen and oil, and in the winter with honey and vinegar. Their salads of lettuces were

dressed with liquamen and vinegar, or with an oxy-poron composed of cummin, ginger, green-rue, nitre, dates, pepper, and honey. But whilst eating lettuce with great gust, the Romans questioned its wholesomeness, and after taking a salad would sometimes correct its hurtful influence by drinking half a cochlearium of oxyporon, mixed with a little vinegar and liquamen. If the meat had occasioned inconvenience, the remedy was nicely calculated to complete the mischief.

The earlier of the old Romans used to close their meals with salad ; but in Martial's time it was usual to eat the green food at the beginning of a repast. He says :—

“*Claudere quæ cœnas Lactuca solebat avorum,
Dic mihi, cur nostras incohat illa dapes?*”

Englised in Gerarde's “*Herbal*,”

“ Tell me, why Lettuce, which our grandsires last did eate,
Is now of late become to be first of meat ?”

Like the Romans of Martial's time, our ancestors, from the feudal days to the eighteenth century, regarded the salad as a prelude to the heavier dishes of a banquet. Whilst Harrison, Cogan and Gerarde remark on this fashion of the English table in Elizabeth's time, culinary authors of the seventeenth century show that the practice of serving green-meat *before* flesh or fish was maintained throughout

the Stuart period. “A boyled sallet of herbs or carrots” appears in the first course of one of John Murrell’s Lenten menus (A.D. 1630.) Giles Rose served “salats” in “the entry” of his banquets. Like the Romans, also, the Old English maintained that the *raw* salad was more pleasant than digestible, some of their gastronomic authorities even going so far as to denounce it as highly prejudicial to health. John Russell was one of these slanderers of an especially wholesome diet. In the “Boke of Nurture,” he says,

“beware of saladis, grene metis, and of frutes rawe,
for þey make many a man have a feeble mawe,
þerfore, of suche fresch lustes set not an hawe,
For such wantoun appetites ar not worth a strawe :”

a foolish opinion that reappears in the prose of “The Boke of Kervynge,” which says, “Beware of greene sallettes and rawe fruytes, for they wyll make your sourayne seke.” Even Gerarde, writing in a time when the beneficial effect of salad on bodies suffering from the salt diet of winter was universally recognized, advises that instead of being “eaten raw with vinegar, oil, and a little salt,” lettuce should be “boiled,” in order that it may be “sooner digested, and nourish more.” For the same reason, Cogan commends boiled lettuce and boiled cucumber. Richard the Second’s physicians do not appear to have held the raw salad in high esteem; for the

subject is dismissed in the “Forme of Cury” with a single receipt, which runs thus:—“Take parsley, sage, garlic, young onions, onions, leek, borage, myntes, porrectes, fenel, and cresses, rue, rosemary, purslain; lave and wash them clean; pick them, pluck them small with thine hand, and mix them well with raw oil. Flavour with vinegar and salt.”

But whilst princes and lords, with an abundant supply of game and fresh flesh during the winter, avoided the salad as indigestible, the commonalty, who subsisted chiefly in the same season on salted provisions, learnt from experience that no food was more quickly remedial of the eruptive diseases and other inconveniences that result from a diet of powdered meat, without fresh vegetables. The wealthy could afford to disdain raw leaves as meat fit only for the rabble; but the commonalty ran to green stuff, and devoured it with equal avidity and thankfulness, as soon as spring had clothed hill-side and hedge-row with the leaves that were at the same time food and physic for the disordered body. The salad of leaves abounds in vestiges of mediæval pharmacy. Indeed, it was the old medicine for the million, which they took daily in the spring season, “as the occasion required,” till the garden and orchard had once again brought forth their annual tribute of delicious fare. Whilst the herb doctors

prescribed the Spring salad for the sick, folk-lore extolled it as a preventive of disease and decay.

Poetry seized the dish to use it as an emblem of vernal freshness and greenness. Shakespeare's Cleopatra says :—

“ My salad days,
When I was green in judgment.”

In “ All's Well that Ends Well,” the poet gives the following conversation :—

Lafeu. "Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady; we may pick a thousand salads, ere we light on such another herb.

Clown. Indeed, Sir, she was the sweet marjoram of the salad, or rather the herb of grace.

Lafeu. They are not salad-herbs, you knave, they are nose-herbs.

Clown. I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, Sir, I have not much skill in grass.

In “ King Henry VI.,” Cade says, “ Wherefore, on a brick wall I climbed into this garden, to see if I can eat grass, or pick a sallet another while, which is not amiss to cool man's stomach this hot weather. And, I think, this word sallet was born to do me good; for many a time but for sallet, my brain-pan had been cleft with a brown bill; and, many a time, when I have been dry, and bravely marching, it hath served me instead of a quart-pot to drink on; and now the word sallet must serve me to feed on.”

Gerarde's lists of garden-growths and simples,

good for salads, comprised :—1. The Spanish nut, “a kind of Floure de Luce.” 2. Onions. 3. Leeks. 4. Chives. 5. Garlic. 6. Turnip-tops. 7. Winter-cresses. 8. Rocket. 9. Tarragon. 10. Other cresses. 11. Garden succorie. 12. Dandelion leaves. 13. Endive. 14. Lettuces of the garden. 15. Wild lettuces. 16. Beets, leaves and root. 17. Spinach. 18. Orach. 19. Dock-leaves. 20. Sorrel. 21. Roots of Rampions. 22. Lesser houseleeks, or prick-madams. 23. Purslane. 24. Sampier leaves. 25. Water-cresses. 26. Brook-lime, or water pimpernel. 27. Borage. 28. Bugloss leaves. 29. Hops, the buds or first sprouts. 30. Garden-burnet. 31. Leaves of musk-roses. 32. Rosemary. Most of these materials for the salad-bowl either had, or were believed to have, medical properties that made them highly salutary in the Spring season ; and some of them were prescribed separately by the herb-doctors, as specifics for certain maladies of the stomach and skin. Thus the cresses, lettuce, brook-lime, and the “ grass,” which takes its special name (scurvy-grass) from the disease which it was supposed to cure, are commended by Elizabethan botanists for being “ good against the scurvy.” Onions, leeks, and chives expelled ill-humours from the system, and stimulated certain organs that suffer quickly from a diet of salted provisions. Tarragon aided the medicinal virtues of lettuce. Dandelion

leaves quickened the sluggish liver. Spinach, dock-leaves, sorrell, sampier leaves, borage leaves, and bugloss leaves, cooled the stomach. Rampion roots cured “heat of the mouth.” Lesser house-leeks and purslane were efficacious in grievous affections, often provoked by a too saline diet, deficient in fresh vegetables. Besides aiding the stomach, borage-flowers and bugloss-leaves acted directly on the heart, and caused lightness of spirits. Hop-buds were excellently stomachic. Garden-burnet “made the heart merry and glad.” Rosemary strengthened the memory. “Leaves of musk-roses, eaten in the morning, in manner of a salad, with oyle, vinegar, and pepper,” were regarded by Gerarde as a highly efficacious medicine for certain kinds of dyspepsia.

Taught by the doctors to think boiled leaves more digestible than raw leaves, our cooks in the earlier half of the seventeenth century often boiled their salads; and whilst this practice prevailed, a mess of boiled green vegetables, such as a dish of spinach, was commonly called a salad, though set scalding hot on the table. For instance, John Murrell (1630), gives the following directions for “Divers Sallets Boyled. Parboile spinage, and chop it fine, with the edges of two hard trenchers upon a board or the backs of two choppin-knives; then set them on a chafin-dish of coales with butter and

vinegar. Season it with cinnamon, ginger, sugar, and a few parboyled currans. Then cut hard eggs into quarters to garnish it withall, and serve it upon sippets. So you may serve burrage, buglass, endive, suckory, coleflowers, corell, marygold leaves, water-cresses, leekes, onyons, sparragus, rocket, alexanders. Parboyle them and season them all alike; whether it be with oyle and vinegar, or butter and vinegar, or cinnamon, ginger, sugar and butter; eggs are necessary, or at least very good for all boyled sallets." Mallow-leaves were boiled tender and served in the same way. Dishes of roots, boiled and buttered, were also called sallets. One reads in the seventeenth century cookery-books of sallets of carrots, and sallets of buttered parsnips. For "a sallet of burdock roots," John Murrell gives the following orders, "Cut off the outward rinde, and lay them in water a good hour at the least; when you have done, seeth them until they be tender; then set them on coales with butter and vinegar, and so let them stand a pretty while; then put in grated bread and sugar betwixt every layer and serve them." At present, such a mess of boiled roots and bread-crumbs would be more likely to be called a pudding than a salad.

Cowslip-salad, made of cowslip-blossoms mixed with vinegar and sugar, is still sometimes eaten by

country-children in the nursery, as a relish with bread-and-butter; but in Charles the First's time, cowslips, violets, roses, and other flowers were dressed in the same way for the dining-room.

At the same time the grand salad of a ceremonious banquet was a medley of herbs, vegetables, fruits and dried fruits, that was not more remarkable for the multifariousness of its ingredients than for the fantastic ingenuity of their arrangement. "To make a grand sallet," says John Murrell, "take buds of *al* good hearbs, and a handful of French capers, seven or eight dates cut in long slices, a handful of raisins of the sun, the stones being pickt out, a handfull of almonds blancht, a handful of currans, five or six figs sliced, a preserved orange cut in slices; mingle al these together with a handful of sugar, then take a faire dishe fit for a shoulder of mutton, set a standarde of paste in the midst of it, put your aforesaid sallet about this standarde, set upon your sallet four half lemons, with the flat ends downwards right over against one another, half-way betwixt your standarde and the dishes side, pricke in every one of these lemons a branch of rosemary, and hang upon the rosemary preserved cherries, or cherries fresh from the tree; set foure half-eggs, being roasted hard, between your lemons, the flat ends downward, prick upon your eggs

sliced dates and almonds; then you may lay another garnish between the brim of the dish and the sallet, of quarters of half eggs, and round slices of lemons; then you may garnish by the brim of the dish with a preserved orange, in long slices, and betwixt every slice of orange, a little heap of French capers. If you have not a standard to serve in, then take half a lemon, and a fine branch of rosemary."

Flesh and fish, such as chicken and veal, salmon and lobster, were often served in green salads, in the middle of the seventeenth century. Robert May gives receipts for several such preparations. It was left for the following century to invent the incomparable dressing Mayonnaise, or (to speak more correctly) Bayonnaise, but the chef who composed the first chicken Mayonnaise did no new thing, in combining *poulet* with green meat.

Whilst our cooks of the seventeenth century made prodigious salads of half-a-hundred heterogeneous, and often discordant ingredients, the chefs of the continent displayed equal zeal and daring in the same department of their art. The grandest of *recorded* salads is one that a lady prepared for the table of Jacob Catz, who died in 1660. A description of this fanciful and elaborate performance may be found in the writings of the Dutch poet, Barlœus. But it may not be inferred

from the celebrity thus accorded to it, that this salad differed materially from the salads usually served at sumptuous tables on grand occasions. Evelyn assures us that it in no way surpassed the salads of the Lord Mayor's banquets.

By the close of the seventeenth century there was need of an elegant and scholarly epicure to reduce to order the conflicting practices of salad-makers. An artist, peculiarly qualified for the difficult task, appeared in John Evelyn, who was at the same time a patron of horticulture, a man of letters, and a fastidious feeder. For the interests of gastronomy, it was also fortunate that Evelyn brought to the undertaking a mature judgment, a mind free from prejudice, and a palate that, never shaken or torpedied by excess, had attained in declining age the fine sensitiveness and exquisite delicacy which can afford the virtuous veteran in gastronomy abundant consolations for the decay of other powers.

Evelyn's "Acetaria" defined the modern salad. Imparting order to chaos, it furnished the cook with intelligent rules and wholesome precepts, and gave precise limits to an art whose special followers had hitherto been the champions of gastronomic license, and the illustrators of gastronomic caprice.

Distinguishing between "olera," vegetables for the pot, which should never be eaten raw, and "acetaria," vegetables which should never be boiled,

John Evelyn had the courage to declare that to cook a salad with heat, or by any slow process of pickling, was to deprive it of the distinguishing attributes to a salad. The true salad was a mess of raw vegetables. He even declined to include among "salleting," in the strictest sense of the term, "apples, pears, abricots, cherries, plums, and other tree and ort-yard fruit," though he admitted that fruit might be admitted as a curious additament, rather than as an ingredient, in salads. The proper sauce for the salad was an artful mixture of mustard, oil, and vinegar, with or without the addition of hard-boiled yolk of new-laid eggs, carefully rubbed into the dressing. One of the points on which the reformer insisted strongly was the material of the salad-bowl. The cooks, who for ostentation's sake used a silver *saladier*, committed a blunder. Those who poured an acetous dressing into a pewter vessel were guilty of an outrage. The proper *saladier* would always be of "porcelaine or of the Holland Delft-ware."

After the rejection of vegetables which should not be eaten raw, and of fruits which should not be accounted as "salleting," there remained some hundred or more growths from which the salad-picker might choose his materials. Evelyn's list of salleting materials comprised several roots and wild herbs never put in the salad-bowl at the present time. It

included: 1, alexanders; 2, artichokes; 3, balm; 4, beet-root and leaf; 5, burnet; 6, blite; 7, borage; 8, brook-lime; 9, bugloss; 10, young buds, such as the buds of the ash and broom; 11, cabbages, several species; 12, Spanish artichoke; 13, carrots; 14, chervile; 15, chickory; 16, clary; 17, chives; 18, cleavers; 19, corn-sallet; 20, cowslips; 21, cresses, several species; 22, cucumber; 23, daisies, blossom and leaves; 24, dandelion-leaves; 25, dock-leaves; 26, elder, leaves and flowers; 27, endive; 28, fennel; 29, several flowers, those, for instance, of the gilly-flower, orange, rosemary, archangel; 30, garlick; 31, goat's - beard; 32, hop - buds; 33, hyssop; 34; Jack-by-the-edge; 35, leeks; 36, lettuce, several species, *i.e.*, Roman, cosse, Silesian, cabbage, and lob; 37, lemon-fruit; 38, mallow; 39, melon; 40, mint; 41, mushrooms; 42, mustard; 43, nettles; 44, Indian nasturtium; 45, onions; 46, orach; 47, orange-fruit; 48, parsnip; 49, green peas; 50, pepper; 51, parsley; 52, pimpernel; 53, pursline; 54, radish, root and leaves; 55, rampions; 56, rocket; 57, rosemary; 58, sage; 59, samphire; 60, scallions; 61, scurvy - grass; 62, sellery; 63, shallots; 64, skirrets; 65, sorrel; 66, sow-thistle; 67, sparagus; 68, spinach; 69, tansy; 70, tarragon; 71, thistle; 72, trick - madam, or prick - madam; 73, turnip-tops; 74, capreoles, tendrils, and claspers of the vine; 75, viper-grass; 76, wood-sorrel. The

list contained, also, tulip-bulbs, daffodil-buds, and half-a-dozen roots unnamed in this paragraph. It was also the commendable practice of some housewives to sprinkle their salads with powdered saffron "for a noble cordial."

So long as the salad-picker might select from so many growths of the wood, the field, the rivulet, and the garden, there were good grounds for questioning the wisdom of the proverb which declares that a fool is equal to a wise man in salad-picking. To discredit this flippant adage, Evelyn alludes to the dismal tragedies often brought about by foolish salad-pickers, who mistook hemlock and aconite leaves for parsley and parsnip leaves, and threw herbs of death into the pot of green-meat.

But with all his knowledge and care John Evelyn made some mistakes, and one prodigious blunder. He orders us to wash the lettuce and other leaves, which (as every boy in the fourth form at Eton knows) should never be wetted in the kitchen, but should be cleaned only by friction with a dry cloth before they are cut, or, better still, broken and tenderly torn into the bowl. Walker, "the Original," was guilty of the same error. At least, he speaks of "drying the leaves of the lettuce," as though it were necessary to wet them in preparing a salad.

The reader of the "Acetaria" should not fail to

notice its directions for mixing mustard, which show that mustard of the English table in the seventeenth century was made with vinegar, instead of water, like the condiment called now-a-days French mustard. In Evelyn's time Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, was famous for its mustard. The Yorkshire seed was also highly esteemed in the market. When the mustard-powder had been mixed with vinegar in which horse-radish had been steeped, the pap was put into a small earthen or glass vessel on a bed of finely-minced onion that gradually flavoured the whole compound, which was kept closely corked till it was wanted for the table.

The receipts for salad-dressing are innumerable, but there are two which should be found in every new cookery-book. Mr. Hayward's receipt for salad and sauce, given in the "Art of Dining," is, "Rub with a fork the yolks of two eggs, boiled hard and cold, in a salad-bowl, with fresh mustard and a little salt; four table spoonfuls of oil to one-and-a-half of tarragon, mixing it into a cream. Cut in the whites, six lettuces well blanched, some tarragon, chevril, a few young onions and burnet, and stir it well. The sauce should be kept in a separate bowl, and not be mixed with the salad, until the moment it is to be eaten, or it may lose its crispness and freshness."

With poetic fervour and scientific exactness, Sydney Smith wrote:

"Two large potatoes, passed through kitchen-sieve,
Unwonted softness to the salad give.
Of mordent mustard add a single spoon,
Distrust the condiment which bites too soon ;
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault
To add a double quantity of salt.
Three times the spoon with oil of Lucca crown,
And once with vinegar procured from town.
True flavour needs it, and your poet begs,
The pounded yellow of two well-boil'd eggs.
Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
And, scarce suspected, animate the whole :
And lastly, on the flavour'd compound toss
A magic tea-spoon of anchovy sauce.
Then, though green turtle fail, though venison's tough,
And ham and turkey are not boiled enough,
Serenely full the epicure may say :—
Fate cannot harm me—I have dined to-day."

Blucher told his soldiers, when firing at the enemy, to aim at the part of the body immediately below the "bread-basket." By aiming at his stomach many a fair man-hunter has brought down the object of her pursuit. There still lives in London a prosperous epicure who in his youth resolved to select a wife from three damsels, who had prudential and other reasons for wishing to marry him. His choice should be determined by their skill in cookery. He would induce them to undergo a competitive examination in the art he valued above all others,

and would award himself as a prize to the candidate who should carry away the greatest number of marks. The young ladies were staying at his mother's house when he carried out his project. Without revealing the purpose of his proposal, he craftily broached the subject of cookery, led the girls on to boast of their prowess, and eventually suggested that they should contend in making boiled custards. Each competitor should have the same materials and opportunities for doing them justice. The proposal being accepted merrily, the custard tournament came off in due course, each combatant being allowed a private room as her peculiar kitchen. It was agreed that the young man and his mother, acting as jurors, should decide on the merits of the performances. In case of difference of opinion, they might invite the house-keeper to aid them in forming a right judgment. But there was no need for consulting a third arbiter. When the three custards were produced, Fanny's was so distinctly best that the two jurors did not hesitate to proclaim her the victor. Three days later Fanny was engaged to the youthful epicure, and three months later they were married. Some twelve months after the marriage, it transpired that in the interval between the agreement for tournament and the time for entering the lists, Fanny had procured from the housekeeper a furtive half-

pint of cream, in addition to the specified materials for war. The cream cost Fanny two sovereigns that were well invested. In justice to her, it should be said she has made her victim an excellent wife, and was heard only the other day to declare, "My dear girls are all that I desire. They are clever, lively, lovely, and of the sweetest temper. But what is to *me* far more important, they are *incapable of artifice*."

In his "Table Traits," Dr. Doran mentions a lady who made her game at the matrimonial table with a salad, picked and mixed by her own hands so artistically, that it caused a learned judge to kneel at her feet. Ere long the poor gentleman had reason to repent his choice, and to applaud the wisdom of the proverb which declares any fool a competent salad-maker. The lady was a fool with a querulous temper, and speedily showed herself as apt at picking a quarrel as a salad. She fretted and tormented her lord in the good old days, when law-courts instead of closing at four o'clock often sat till late evening; and this judge with an unattractive home was noted for the delight he took in doing his duty by *night* as well as by day. To counsel or jury, who muttered aught of the lateness of the hour and of their engagements elsewhere, he used to say mournfully, "Gentlemen, *as we must*

be somewhere, we cannot be better anywhere than we are here."

The success of this unworthy dame may be matched with that of the "gentleman salad-maker," whose story is told with charming sprightliness by Brillat-Savarin. In the evil days of the great French Revolution, the Chevalier d'Albignac escaped from Paris to George the Third's London, where he subsisted painfully, if not miserably, on a small pittance allowed him by the English Government, until accident afforded him a field for the profitable exercise of the only art which he could turn to money. The Chevalier was dining in the coffee-room of a fashionable hotel, to which he had been invited by an affluent friend, when a young English nobleman, who was dining with another party in the same room, entreated him courteously to mix a salad in the French fashion. The request was made so politely that M. d'Albignac consented, and of course he executed the task in a manner that elicited enthusiastic commendations. His complaisance and communicativeness to the young nobleman had agreeable results. The salad-maker took a fat fee (£5) for his services, and shortly afterwards he received from the lord of a great house in Grosvenor Square an entreaty that he would visit the mansion at a certain hour, to make another salad for an epicurean company. M.

d'Albignac had the good sense to accept the offer, which during the next week was followed by similar applications. His marvellous salads were soon the talk of the town, their fame being accompanied with romantic exaggerations of the misfortunes which had befallen him through the execrable revolution. The "gentleman salad-maker" was the hero of the hour, and ladies of the highest fashion were heard rapturously commending his "works" in gilded salons, or avowing that they could not live another week without devouring one of them. "'I die for it,'" says Brillat-Savarin, "c'est l'expression consacrée."

"Désir de nonne est un feu qui dévore,
Désir d'Anglaise est cent fois pire encore."

Seizing every opportunity to satisfy his admirers and win new clients, M. d'Albignac started his carriage in order that he might pass quickly from house to house during the dining hours of the aristocracy. Yet further, opening a shop for the accommodation of the many epicures who lived beyond the boundary of his quarter for personal attendances, or who could not afford to pay his fee for a visit, he drove a lucrative trade in sauces, spices, and other culinary dainties. A few years spent in this beneficent activity, enabled the Chevalier to return with a fortune of 80,000 francs

to his native land, where he purchased a pleasant house at Limousin for 20,000 francs, and invested the rest of his money in government securities, which stood just then at 50 per cent.

Brillat-Savarin mentions other Frenchmen of gentle lineage and culture, who, in the same period of public troubles and private embarrassments, armed themselves with spit and stew-pan, and conquered adversity with the weapons of cookery. Whilst M. d'Albignac made salads in London, a nobleman of Brittany flourished as a pastrycook at Cologne, and *le capitaine* Collet acquired riches by making ices for the people of New York. Brillat-Savarin himself condescended to practise the "generous art" at Boston, where in the time of his Transatlantic exile he imparted to Julien, the restaurateur, the secret of making "des œufs brouillés au fromage." Julien, by the way, was a political émigré, who had been chef to the Archbishop of Bordeaux before he established himself in the United States. Gastronomic art was affected in a remarkable manner by the great revolution, which compelled the chefs of the shattered noblesse to open a new class of restaurants for the Parisian commonalty, and imparted their mysteries to every civilized nation.

CHAPTER IX.

EGGS.

"Eggs were held by the Egyptians as a sacred emblem of the renovation of mankind after the Deluge. The Jews adopted it to suit the circumstances of their history, as a type of their departure from the land of Egypt, and it was used in the feast of the Passover as part of the furniture of the table, with the Paschal Lamb. The Christians have certainly used it on this day, as containing the elements of future life, for an emblem of the resurrection."—HUTCHINSON'S "HISTORY OF NORTHUMBERLAND."

"Bless, O, Lord! we beseech thee, this thy creature of eggs, that it may be a whole sustenance to thy faithful servants, eating it in thankfulness to thee, on account of the resurrection."—PAUL THE FIFTH's "RITUAL FOR ENGLAND, IRELAND, AND SCOTLAND."

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall,
 All the king's horses and all the king's men,
 Could not put Humpty Dumpty together again."

NURSERY RHYMES.

AB ovo usque ad mala. The Roman practice was to open a repast with eggs; but at the English table it has been usual to serve them in later stages of the meal. "In modern entertainments," says the "Tabella Cibaria," "they generally come in the rear." The modern epicure, therefore, will not condemn the arrangement which postponed the special consideration of eggs till matters of greater weight and moment, though

scarcely of greater delicacy, should have been discussed. Anyhow, to speak of eggs is a duty that had better be done late than never.

The man would be rash who should venture to state precisely in how many different ways eggs may be cooked. Possibly it is true that the number of those diverse processes equals the number of days in the years. Some readers of this page have probably perused the little book, in which a lady of title not long since gave directions for cooking eggs in a hundred different fashions. Whilst recognizing its merits, the critics concurred in declaring that some of the best methods of preparing eggs were not described in the treatise. The housewife, with a clear memory of the hundred ways, and with sufficient skill for their execution, may, however, deem herself sufficiently instructed and expert in a single department of culinary art. In his orders "To Dress Eggs Divers Ways For Fasting Days, All The Year Round," Giles Rose gives no more than sixty-five distinct receipts. If sixty-five were enough for Charles the Second's chef, a hundred may suffice for a model housewife of the nineteenth century.

The lady of title took some of her "hundred ways" from Giles Rose's "Perfect School of Instructions For Officers of the Mouth," and one at least of the receipts thus transferred from the

"Perfect School" to the "Hundred Ways," may be found in the "*Magia Naturalis*" of Baptista Porta, who told his readers what to do in order "That an egg may grow bigger than a Man's Head." In the absence of proof that he "borrowed" the marvellous process from an earlier scribe, the Neapolitan sage must be regarded as the originator of the curious device which he set forth in Latin, thus Englished by his translator in the Commonwealth period :—"If you would have an egge so bigge, there is an art, how it may cover other eggs in it, and be not known from a natural egge. You shall part fifty or more yelks of eggs and whites, one from the other; mingle the yelks gently, and put them into a bladder, and bind it round as you can; put it into a pot full of water, and when you see it bubble, or when they are grown hard, take them out and add the whites to them; so filling the yelks that they stand in the middle, and boil them again; so shall you have an egge made without a shell, which you shall frame thus. Powder the white egg-shells, clean washed, that they may fly into fine dust; steep this in strong or distilled vinegar, till they grow soft; for if an egge be long in vinegar the shell will dissolve, and grow tender, that it may be easily passed through the small mouth of a glass; when it is thrust in with fair water it will come to its

former hardness, that you will wonder at it; when the shells are dissolved like an unguent, with a pencil make a shell about your egg that is boiled, and let it harden in clear water, so shall you have a natural egge." George the Third wondered how the apples got inside the dumpling. On seeing an egg of this curious manufacture, it would have puzzled him far more to discover how the yolks, whites, and shells of half-a-hundred eggs could be induced to unite and re-arrange themselves so naturally. Baptista Porta's marvellous egg was often served on our supper-tables in the seventeenth century, not so much as a "creature for man's comfort," as a curious adornment and spectacle.

Experience shows that to boil an egg is more difficult than mere theorists imagine. Two-thirds of our hard-boiled eggs are far too hard; and of soft-boiled eggs not one in ten is taken from the water at the happy instant when all the white is fully set, and all the yolk is still fluid. Most of the failures in boiling eggs are referable to the inattention or stupidity of the cook; but the familiar operation is attended with difficulties which no sagacity and care in the operator can always surmount. These difficulties, arising chiefly from the variety of the sizes of eggs, cannot be met by precise and inflexible rules. The "three minutes in the boiling water," which

are the right time for hens' eggs of ordinary size, are too long for the smaller, and too short for the bigger eggs of the same fowl. The same objections apply to the expedient of putting eggs in the water when cold, and removing them from it directly it begins to boil. To boil eggs is a nice, if not an arduous task, and a simpleton should not be trusted to execute it, any more than he should be trusted to compound a salad. The perfect egg-boiler should be able to see through the wall which envelops the object of his address, and observe what is going on inside.

The peasant who bakes his egg in hot wood-embers piled about the shell, knows by a sure sign when the meat is sufficiently cooked. As soon as a clear dew-drop exudes from the shell's top, visible above the embers, the egg is done to the perfection of softness. Ovid alludes to this ancient and probably earliest method of cooking eggs in the line,

"Ovaque, non acri leviter versata favillâ."

By the way the Egyptians are said to have cooked eggs by whirling them round in a sling, till the internal commotion affected the whites and yolks as they are affected by boiling. Not long since a gastronomic investigator bought a sling and basket of eggs for the purpose of testing the efficacy of this process. But though he worked away with a zeal

worthy of a good cause, this slinger of eggs desisted from his exertions with a mean opinion of the Egyptian method. Having agitated and, indeed, cooked himself much more than his eggs, he wiped the sweat from his brow and threw away the sling in disgust. The same inquirer has, however, satisfied himself that the author of the “*Tabella Cibaria*” was justified in saying, “The surest mode of trying an egg is to apply the tip of the tongue to the blunt end ; if it feels warm, and the acute end cold, it is a proof that no fermentation has taken place.”

The robust countryman may think poached eggs with fried rashers the best of all egg-dishes, but the town-bred epicure will always prefer the savoury omelet to such eggs and collops as are still served in Northern England on Collop (or Shrove) Monday, and were dressed in olden time for Oxford scholars on the Saturday before Shrove Tuesday, at the academic Egg Feast. Taken as a concluding delicacy at dinner, the sweet omelet commands approval, but the omelet of herbs is more acceptable to the nervous student who requires a light, though sustaining dish, with the roll and coffee of his morning meal. As practice can alone enable the practical gastronomer to surmount, avoid, or appreciate the difficulties of omelet-making, little shall be said here of a process to which the first Napoleon directed his attention. Palliating with a pleasantry

one of his disastrous blunders in the art of war, the great Emperor observed, " You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs." Unfortunately the Emperor, like an incompetent cook, had broken the eggs without making the omelet. But if the dish had been successful the artiste would not have wasted a thought on the materials used in its production. So the poor eggs were, in a certain way, gainers by the imperial failure.

Two centuries and more before the rise of the Napoleonian star, another French hero had failed in an attempt at omelet-making. Accompanied by Gourville, who tells the story, the great Condé, in a critical hour of his fortunes, arrived at a small roadside tavern, which could offer the campaigners no better provision than a few new-laid eggs. The only additions the Prince could make to this cheap fare were a basket of bread, a bottle of wine, some cheese, and a few walnuts. Affairs had a melancholy aspect, but the exhaustion of their horses forbade the Prince and his attendants to seek better entertainment elsewhere. The hour was late, the weather stormy, and the region desolate. For that night the village-inn must be the home of the adventurers. To raise the drooping spirits of his party, the Prince declared that he, their chieftain, would for once be their chef. It was a maxim of the military profession that every soldier ought to be a cook, and

surely a leader, who had made campaigns with honour, might be thought competent to make an omelet without failure. So the Prince set to work, and with the help of the landlady, from whom he condescended to take a few practical suggestions, he figured creditably in his new employment till the moment came for tossing the omelet in the pan. Then came the catastrophe, probably through the operator's excessive confidence and zeal. Tossing the omelet—the Prince pitched it into the fire. A groan of agony went up from the famished staff, thus deprived in an instant of the food they sorely needed. Luckily there were still eggs enough for another essay, and the Prince had the discretion to relinquish an office into which he had forced himself with excellent intentions, though with insufficient experience.

Good for the body's health at Easter, as Cogan assures us, scratcht eggs have been known to influence beneficially the eater's spiritual life. Jacques Barreaux, the song-writer, who needed conversion as much as any Frenchman of his time, was won over to religion and the church by a herb-omelet. Like the convenient reasoner who argued that, if a cunning contriver was needful for the manufacture of a watch, the universe, with all its wondrous mechanism must have proceeded from an all-wise Creator, Jacques Barreaux saw that the omelet, which he

had relished so keenly, did not point more certainly to a cook than the whole world to its Maker. Having recognized the author in the thing of art, he went on to "look through nature up to nature's God." Barreaux's conversion and the theologian's watch-trick were probably in Sydney Smith's mind when, at the close of an admirable dinner which had been unpleasantly disturbed by a young man's sceptical declamations, he turned sharply on the free-talker with the question, "And pray, Sir, do you believe in a cook?"

When the Asian Sidonia encountered young Coningsby in a village ale-house, as the latter was on the point of sitting down to a dish of poached eggs and collops, he observed, "Ah! you are proud of your bacon and your eggs; but I believe in corn and wine. They are our chief and oldest luxuries. Time has brought us substitutes, but how inferior! Man has deified corn and wine! but not even the Chinese or the Irish have raised temples to tea and potatoes." It is strange that Mr. Disraeli, whilst playing thus lightly and pedantically with facts from the history of food, omitted so good an opportunity for referring to the sentimental and religious associations of the egg. Since he was in a talkative, not to say lecturing mood, how well it would have been for Sidonia to inform his youthful friend that the egg was regarded as an emblem of the universe

by the ancient Gauls, Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Persians ; that the Egyptians made it a symbol of Human Renovation after the Deluge ; and that centuries ere the Christians had accepted their faith from a Jew, and adopted the egg as an emblem of the Resurrection, the “chosen people,” honouring it as a symbol of new life, had made it a type of their departure from slavery in Egypt to a better existence in the Land of Promise. Having dealt epigrammatically with this subject, Sidonia might also have heightened Coningsby’s enjoyment of his poaches by remarking lightly that, besides exalting it as a symbol of the universe pregnant with life, which in due course assumes living and separate form, the Romans used the egg in divination for ascertaining the future sex of creatures not yet born.

When Livia consulted a fortune-teller on a question of delicate and closely personal interest, she was admonished to hatch an egg by the warmth of her own bosom, and observe the gender of the chicken. If the egg afforded a hen-chick, Livia would have a daughter ; if it yielded a cockling, she would have a boy. Having taken to her egg, Livia hatched a cock-bird, whose appearance was quickly followed by a chick of another species—the little Tiberius. Of course Livia’s example was generally followed by the matrons of Rome, who,

to use the flippant language of a learned author, “like brooding hens, devoted themselves to the curious amusement of gallinaceous incubation.”

Just as Christians in widely separated lands of Christendom exchanged presents of Easter pace-eggs, in token of their faith in the doctrine of the Resurrection, the old Romans used, at the opening of a new year, to give and take eggs in memory of Castor and Pollux, and in sign of their gladness at entering, if not a new existence, a new cycle of time. Prohibited during Lent to the devout, eggs were served at the English table in half-a-hundred different fashions, during our Catholic period, on the termination of that austere season. If the scarcity of eggs during the earlier weeks of Lent may have disposed our ancestors to observe scrupulously the Church’s orders for abstaining from them, it cannot, on the other hand, be questioned that the increasing cheapness of eggs after Lent was not less effective than religious sentiment in making Easter-tide a universal egg-festival. Neither of the influences which concurred to render the old egg holidays popular with all classes should be lost sight of. Whilst the mediæval worldlings devoured their Easter eggs eagerly, if not scandalously, because they were good and cheap, and “permitted,” devout women thought seriously and gratefully of the

future life, typified by the pace-eggs, which they gave to their children and nearest friends.

Of the decorations of the pace-eggs it is needless to speak at length. Every one knows how they were coloured on the shell with various dyes, or covered with gilding ; how some were speckled with dots of white, or were curiously inscribed with letters, legends, or simple pictures ; and how the practice of exchanging gifts of these emblematical eggs at Easter gave rise to half-a-score sportive usages whose vestiges may still be found in our rural life. Every Easter, during the time of Louis the Fifteenth, eggs thus embellished used to be piled in high pyramids on the royal table at Versailles ; and when the King had surveyed the piles of toys, he used to distribute them amongst his courtiers.

CHAPTER X.

DESSERT.

“ ‘Tis the dessert that graces all the feast,
 For an ill end disparages the rest;
 A thousand things well done, and one forgot,
 Defaces obligation with a blot.”

DR. KING’S “ART OF COOKERY.”

“ Un dessert sans fromage est une belle à qui il manque un œil.”—
 BRILLAT-SAVARIN’S “APHORISMS.”

M. de B—— said to a capitalist, I dined the other day with a poet who regaled us at dessert with an excellent epigram. Crœsus, alike ignorant and greedy, instantly sent for his cook and demanded of him, “ How comes it that you have never given me any epigrams to eat?”—ANECDOTES OF THE TABLE.

THE reader doubtless remembers that whilst they often opened their banquets with a light and appetizing “ prelude” to the first proper course, it was no less usual with the old English to close their feasts with a service of trivial dainties that was not regarded as a regular course. Brawn, salad, bread and wine were the most common “creatures” of the prelude. Hippocras (the mediæval liqueur), wafers, fruits, creams, and cheese were the culinary materials of the after-course, set upon the board as the guests were on the point of retiring.

This after-course—"voider," as it was also termed in Plantagenet and Tudor times—was styled "The Issue of the Table," or more briefly "the Issue," by our best chefs of the seventeenth century. Giles Rose always designated it by the one or the other of these expressive terms ; but Giles Rose lived to hear a new name for "The Issue." Skinner, the philologist, who died in 1667 in the forty-fourth year of his age, speaks of "dessert" (from the Latin *deservire*) as a word newly invented for the after-course of superfluous delicacies, *served* on the removal of the last of *the services*. Commending itself to the scholar no less quickly than to the epicure, the new term passed from table-talk to literature. "We shall," wrote the third Lord Shaftesbury, "to make amends, endeavour afterwards in our following miscellany to entertain him again with more cheerful fare, and afford him a dessert to rectify his palate, and leave his mouth at last in good relish."

"Issue" went out of use, even as "voider" and "aftercourse" had become obsolete in previous times ; and from the opening of the eighteenth century the elegant "finish" of the English dinner has always been called "the dessert."

Though not invariably put on the table, cheese was seldom absent from the olden desserts, for it was believed to help digestion, and was eaten—as it still continues to be eaten by unscientific feeders

—at the close of a hearty meal, as an agreeable remedy for the ill effects of indulgence. “After cheese comes nothing,” is an old table-proverb. Whilst condemning curds as unwholesome, John Russell extolled the medicinal efficacy of cheese. Together with costlier and more elaborate desserts for higher folk, the same author, ordering the franklin’s aftercourse, says,

“Then appuls and peres with spices delicately,
After þe terme of þe yere fulle deynteithly,
With brede and chese to calle,
Spised cakes and wafurs worthily
With bragot and methe, þus men may meryly
Plese welle both gret and smalle.”

The children of Seager’s “Schoole of Vertue” (1557) are ordered to set a similar dessert before their parents,

“Then cheese with fruite, on the table set,
With bisketes or caroways, as you may get.
Wyne to them fyll, els ale or beare,
But wyne is metest, if any there were.”

Though cheese seldom appeared in Giles Rose’s desserts, the practice of serving cheese with fruits, *au naturel*, or in tarts, was not relinquished at the most modish tables of the seventeenth century. The practice of eating cheese with apple-tart, which still survives amongst the old-fashioned gentle-folk of Lancashire and other provinces, originated in

times when fruit was seldom served at the English table without the accompaniment of cheese.

The modern dessert, by the way, always comprehends cheese in some form, though the division of the true after-course into two parts causes many persons to regard the cheese as part of the play rather than a feature of the epilogue. This division of the dessert resulted from the introduction of the mahogany table, which disposed epicures to banish the cloth on the removal of the last course, in order that they might see the reflections of the glass and fruits on the highly-polished surface of the hard wood. On this innovation in the ordering of feasts, it was decided to dismiss the cheese before the removal of the cloth, as a "creature" which would not add to the lustre and beauty of the aftercourse to which it belonged. Writing in the mahogany period—when the new wood of warm colour and mirror-like brilliance made entertainers especially studious of display in the aftercourse, and was daily eliciting new contrivances for its embellishment,—Dr. King, in "The Art of Cookery," gives us a dessert without cheese.

" Make your transparent sweet-meats truly nice,
With Indian sugar and Arabian spice;
And let your various creams encircl'd be
With swelling fruit just ravished from the tree.
Let plates and dishes be from China brought,
With lively paint and earth transparent wrought.

The feast now done, discourses are renewed,
 And witty arguments with mirth pursu'd ;
 The cheerful master mid his jovial friends,
 His glass to their best wishes recommends.
 The grace-cup follows to his sovereign's health,
 And to his country plenty, peace and wealth.
 Performing then the piety of grace,
 Each man that pleases reassumes his place."

When these lines were first written, it was a question with modish entertainers whether creams should be served at the later dessert, to which they were more disfiguring than ornamental, or should be taken with the cheese at the earlier dessert.

One of Brillat-Savarin's aphorisms declares that a dessert without cheese resembles a lovely woman who wants an eye. A French writer tells a story of a Gascon who, seeing a lovely Roquefort cheese at dessert, exclaimed, "Ah! it is superb; where shall I make the first cut?" And then, turning to his servant, added, "Take that cheese home; it is *there* that I will make the first cut."

In connexion with the creams of the Old English dessert, it should be observed that they gave us one of the pleasantest terms in our language. In the "Boke of Nurture" we read,

" Bewar at eve of crayme of cowe and also of the goote, þauȝ it be
 too late,
 Of strawberries and hurtilberyes, with the cold Ioncate,
 For þese may marre many a man changynge his astate,
 But ȝiff he have astur, hard chese wafurs, with wyne yopocrate.

But though Russell denounced it as unwholesome, the populace delighted in the preparation of milk-curds, that derived its name of joncate or junket from the “junci,” *i.e.*, rushes on which the curds were laid, so that the whey left in them might run off readily, and which, having thus served as a drainer in the dairy, did duty afterwards as a dish for the dainty at table. Wherever milk and festivity abounded in Old England there was also junket; and junket being thus universally associated with joviality, our forefathers regarded it as a symbol of social enjoyment, and used its name as synonymous with hilarity. Holidays were called junket-days, and all the good things eaten at wakes were called junket-fare. Gerarde, in his “Herbal,” makes several allusions to “junketting dishes,” and Giles Rose points to the etymology of the term when he writes of “cream in jonchee, made with wild reeds.” The West of England junket is one of the several milk-foods which still retain the appellation that, limited at first to curds drained on rushes, was eventually extended to other preparations of milk and cream. The Cambridgeshire milk-cheese, served in recent time on straws instead of rushes or rush-reeds, is another variety of the olden junkets.

Solomon the Wise wrote, “As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is the faithful messenger to them that send him, for he refresheth the soul

of his masters"—words even more applicable to the ice of the modern table than to the snow which the King of Israel mingled with his wine in torrid seasons. Like the Jews in their land of sun and drought, the ancient Greeks and Romans were systematic preservers of snow for use in Summer. This being so, it is strange that the moderns of Western Europe did not sooner follow an example which cannot have been unknown to their learned men.

The first of modern people to revive a practice which had been discontinued in the dark ages, the Italians were also the first to cool their drinks by means of saltpetre dissolved in water.

To refrigerate water or wine for his noble patients, Blasus Villafranca, the Spanish physician of Rome in the middle of the sixteenth century, used to employ the following processes. Having filled a long-necked flask with the liquid on which he desired to operate, he placed it in an open vessel of cold water, and moved it quickly round in the same direction on its axis. Whilst thus turning the bottle and agitating the water in which it was immersed, he gradually dropped saltpetre into the water until it was strongly impregnated with the salt. On being taken from the saline bath, the drink in the closed bottle was cold almost to freezing. Who discovered this process is unknown, but as Villafranca only

claimed credit for being the first to make it public, it may be presumed that it was not his invention. Probably it had been employed by the more curious and skilful of the Roman doctors for some time before 1550, in which year Villafranca wrote about the method. Though the ancient Romans may have lowered the temperature by a similar use of other salts, they cannot be credited with originating Villafranca's particular method, as saltpetre was unknown to them.

The next advance on Villafranca's plan for producing coolness was to mix the saltpetre with snow, instead of dissolving it in water, and to place flasks of selected drinks in the salted snow. This step towards the familiar process for manufacturing ice was probably taken before the end of the sixteenth century. Latinus Tancredus of Naples described this method of converting water into solid ice in his "De Fame et Siti" (1607), and Baptista Porta, who died in 1615 at Naples, where he was of course known to Tancredus, sets forth the same operation in the "Natural Magic," where he says, "I will show how wine may freeze in glasses. Because the chief thing desired at feasts is that wine, cold as ice, may be drunk, especially in Summer, I will teach you how wine shall presently, not onely grow cold, but freeze, that you cannot take it but by sucking, and drawing in of your breath. Put

wine into a vial, and put a little water to it, that it may turn to ice the sooner; then cast snow into a wooden vessel, and strew into it saltpetre powdered, or the cleansing of saltpetre, commonly called Salazzo. Turn the vial in the snow, and it will congeal by degrees."

In the later half of the sixteenth century, whilst saltpetre was being thus turned to account, the practice of preserving snow and ice for consumption in hot weather spread from Italy to other States. In France, the most luxurious epicures of Henry the Third's Court caused snow to be placed on their tables in July and August; and in the following reign this fashion became more general, though the anonymous author of the "Description de l'Isle des Hermaphrodites" exhibited it to scorn, as an illustration of the wantonness and effeminacy of the age. The satire only extended and stimulated the desire for the new enjoyment. Gallants and fine ladies, who had hitherto been content in Summer to slake their thirst with spring-water and wine cooled in the running rivulet, pined and cried for drinks cooled with snow and saltpetre, as soon as they were told it was immoral to wish for them. Having tried the frigid water and iced wines, they required that other beverages should be treated in the same way. The confectioners of Paris were not slow to obey the order. They iced fresh fruits—peaches, apr-

cots, pears, grapes. They produced drinking vessels of ice, by congealing water between two moulding-cups, the one put inside the other. And having invented lemonade, somewhere about the year 1630, they iced it before giving it to their customers. They treated half-a-score other syrup beverages in the same manner. Thirty years later, not content with refrigerating these drinks, they converted them to ice, *i.e.*, the "water-ice" that is served profusely at our tables in hot weather. The first "water-ices" were manufactured by Procope Condeaux, the Florentine, who, settling in Paris in the latter half of the seventeenth century, founded the famous Café Procope, which still exists, and quickly became the most fashionable caterer of ices, syrup-drinks, coffee, and sweetmeats in that capital. Procope's customers, however, regarding his ices as luxuries for the Summer, seldom or never ate them in the other seasons. The famous Procope's successor, Dubuisson, was the first confectioner to sell ices in Paris all the year round. Cream-ice, or butter-ice, as it was originally designated, was a much later invention than water-ice. It is on record that the first cream-ice was set before the Duc de Chartres in 1774 by a Parisian artiste, who had depicted the duke's arms on the refreshing material.

While the frivolous voluptuaries of Paris were running wild about iced drinks, iced fruits, and

water-ices, in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, the English epicures knew little or nothing of these novelties by experience. A few of our travelling countrymen may have "tried the ice" at Parisian tables. A large number of scholarly Englishmen had read in the Fifth Book of John Barclay's "*Argenis*" how Juba entertained his guest, Arsidas, under an African sun, with cool drinks served in glacial vases, and fruits cold as block-ice. And to most of the readers of the Latin romance it was known that, instead of being creatures of the author's fancy, he had often seen and taken these refreshments at the tables of Parisian and Italian epicures. But Barclay, who died in 1621, had been many years in his grave before water-ices and refrigerated drinks were served at the banquets of our highest nobility. Lord Bacon mentions congelation by means of snow and saltpetre; but his interest in the novel process is purely scientific, and he gives no hint that the invention was of any concern to gastronomers. The seventeenth century cookery-books are significantly silent about ices, and artificial congelation. The "icing" of their receipts is merely the old process for giving surfaces an icy appearance by varnishing them with sugar-paste. The fact is, England, in the later time of Charles the First and during the Commonwealth, was occupied with weightier and

less pleasant affairs than questions of eating which had no relation to party-politics. Her people could wrangle about “fat goose” and “plum-porridge,” or any other edible that became for the moment a symbol of party-sentiment; but they had no money to lavish on new delicacies, when they were melting their plate to buy arms, or groaning under the exactions of a rigorous government. The “generous art,” as Robert May bears witness, vanished during our civil troubles, and it was not revived, with ices from the continent, till the season of universal restoration had arrived.

On their return from exile, the Cavaliers imported to England a taste for Parisian costume, manners, and luxury. From the French Court they brought the French wig, some of whose ludicrous varieties are still worn by our lawyers in Westminster Hall. They introduced French modes of exchanging salutes and pledging healths. They were followed by French cooks and confectioners, who substituted cutlets (costelets) for chops, and taught our sugar-manufacturers to make the “sucré brûlé,” a term quickly corrupted by our populace to “barley-sugar,” the “sucré-d’orge” of the later French sugar-boilers, who, after losing for many years one of their ancestors’ processes, recovered it under a new name from our manufacturers. To gratify the foreign tastes which their patrons had acquired

in exile, these same dealers in dainties sold water-ices.

At the same time our royal persons and wealthiest nobles began to store ice in Winter for consumption in the Summer. Charles the Second constructed in St. James's Park an ice-house, which was deemed so notable and curious a contrivance that Waller made particular mention of it in his poem *On St. James's Park, as Lately Improved By His Majesty,*

“Such various ways the spacious alleys lead,
My doubtful muse knows not what path to tread.
Yonder the harvest of cold months laid up,
Gives a fresh coolness to the royal cup,
There Ice, like crystal, firm and never lost,
Tempers hot July with December’s frost;
Winter’s dark prison, whence he cannot fly,
Tho’ warm the Spring, his enemy, draws nigh;
Strange! what extremes should thus preserve the snow,
High on the Alps or in deep caves below.”

In the following century the practice of preserving ice became more general, till, at the commencement of George the Third’s reign, water-ices were sold by all the fashionable confectioners of London, and it was rare to find a country-house without adequate provision for “tempering July with December’s frost.” Towards the close of the same age cream-ice was also served commonly at our most luxurious tables soon after its invention in Paris. Half-a-century later we began to import

ice in large quantities from America, and at a yet more recent date from Norway. The popularity of Wenham Lake Ice afforded an opportunity for a jest to Albert Smith, who insisted that its sale should be restrained by a statute against chemical poisons and other *wenemous* productions. When Albert uttered this harmless pleasantry, ice, no longer the special luxury of the affluent and fastidious, had become a popular refreshment, sold for a few pence at every pastrycook's shop, and served at Islington no less liberally than in Mayfair. In this latest stage of its story, it resembled the junket of old time in being accepted as a symbol of festivity. When Mr. Chisholm Anstey's copious and acrid eloquence against Lord Palmerston had been abruptly stayed by an invitation to Cambridge House, and a few pleasant words from Lady Palmerston, the silenced orator was denounced by an old colleague for having "sold himself for an ice." Some readers of this page may, perhaps, have listened with malicious glee whilst this sufferer from a comrade's instability exclaimed at dinner-table or in drawing-room, "I have often heard of men selling themselves. There is nothing new in that. As long as the world lasts, men will sell themselves for rank, title, office. If *he* had sold himself for a riband, a star, a snug berth, he would have only done like hundreds of better

men before him. But, Sir, *he sold himself for an ice!*" Rated at the lowest, the politician's price was not an ice, but the pleasure of taking it in Lady Palmerston's drawing-room, together with the greater pleasure of being known to have taken it there.

At present, when London abounds with penny ices for the million, who take also their ginger-beer fresh from the ice-wells of vagrant drink-dealers, a large proportion of the inferior ice used by our humblest confectioners and lemonadiers is procured from the ponds and canals near London. And towards the close of a dull, foggy, biting day of a hard Winter, the town affords no sight more depressing to the nervous invalid, and more likely to fill his bones with rheumatic pain and suicidal purpose, than the spectacle of a long line of ice-carts, ice-drays, ice-trucks, moving with scarcely perceptible progress towards the suburban cellar, where each of the vehicles will deposit its chilling, dirty load.

But to pass from ice in its most repellent form to the brighter elements of the dessert, to fruits of warm colour, alluring form, delicate aroma, and delicious flavour.

The Elizabethan table was not more plentifully supplied with vegetables than with fruit. Besides the dried fruits which have been mentioned in a previous Chapter, it displayed the olives, lemons,

and oranges of Southern Europe. This last fruit was highly valued by our Tudor ancestors, in the days when it reminded Henry the Eighth's wife of the orange-groves of her native land. Slaking their thirst with its juice, they prized its peel for its stomachic bitterness, and also for its fragrance, which was supposed to counteract noxious smells. Cavendish's splendid picture of Wolsey exhibits him superbly clad in scarlet silk and sables, and "holding in his hand a very fine orange, whereof the meat or substances within was taken out, and filled again with the part of a sponge, wherein was the vinegar and other confections against the pestilent airs, the which he most commonly smelt under passing among the press, or else when he was pestered with many suitors." In the days when Wolsey thus held a large orange-skin to his nose, as he rode on his mule from chambers to Westminster Hall, the orange-rind packed with spices and wet sponge was the usual *vinaigrette* of modish persons of either sex.

Cogan gave evidence to the medicinal virtues of the same fragrant peel. "The rinds of oranges," he wrote, "are preserved condite in sugar, and so are the flowers of the orange-tree. Either of them being taken in little quantity do greatly comfort a feeble stomach." Though tincture of orange-peel still retains its place amongst the stomachic cordials

of our pharmacopeia, no living physician would recommend a dyspeptic patient to seek relief from his malady by eating the candied rind. In the seventeenth century, however, this sweet and indigestible preparation was eaten to cure heart-burn and colic. In his "Delightful Daily Exercise for Ladies and Gentlemen" (1621), John Murrell gives directions for "making orange-chipps, a very cordial thing against the paine in the stomach." The reader, doubtless, remembers how Boswell was perplexed by Johnson's eccentric practice of pocketing the rinds of the oranges whose meat he had eaten in company. Though Boswell could not conceive the object of this mysterious proceeding, and Johnson persisted maliciously in refusing to gratify his friend's curiosity, there can be no question that the dyspeptical man of letters pilfered the peelings for his stomach's sake.

Whilst orange-trees bore blossom and fruit in the hot-houses of our princes and wealthiest nobles, it was the practice of our seventeenth-century ancestors to serve oranges, raw or boiled, with veal, mutton, and other meats. Oliver Cromwell had a passion for loin of veal sauced with oranges, and it is recorded in the account of his wife's "Court and Kitchen" (1664), that when oranges were selling at fourpence a piece, in consequence of his rupture with Spain, the Protector upbraided

his lady because his favourite joint was set before him without its “proper sauce.” Whereupon Elizabeth Cromwell, no less firm in domestic affairs than her husband in matters of state policy, declared roundly that till oranges were cheaper none should be seen at her board. It was a pity, she added, that her lord and master forgot to consult his appetite and digestion before he quarreled with the Spaniard.

The art which had flourished in our monastic gardens during the earlier feudal centuries, and had suffered cruelly from the Wars of the Roses, revived under the two latest Henrys, and made rapid progress in the days of Elizabeth. Harrison speaks of the gardens and orchards of his period in terms which would alone prove that their culture was the favourite amusement of his polite contemporaries. But the social historian is only one of the several witnesses to testify that the Elizabethan was an age singularly propitious to every kind of horticulture. Whilst Lobel and Gerarde were classifying the growths of the soil, Bacon wrote his essay on “Gardens,” and munificent patrons of the art—which in later times found worthy illustrators in Cowley, Evelyn, Temple, and Walpole—were procuring new seeds and plants from foreign lands in both hemispheres. Harrison had seen the orange-tree and lemon-tree growing on our soil, and could

name English gardeners who were trying to rear the olive in our northern climate. "We have in like sort," he adds, "such workmen as are not onelie excellent in grafting the natural fruits, but also in their artificial mixtures, whereby one tree bringeth forth sundrie fruits, and one and the same fruit of divers colours and tastes, dallieing with it as with nature and hir course, as if her whole trade were perfectlie known unto them; of hard fruits they will make tender, of sour sweet, of sweet yet more delicate, bereeuing also some of their kernels, other of their cores, and finally inducing them with savour of muske, ambre, or sweet spices, at their pleasure. Diverse also have written at large of these several practices, and some of them how to convert the kernels of peaches into almonds, of small fruit to make far greater." He speaks also of the great improvements made during the previous forty years in the culture of the apple, plum, pear, walnut, and filbert.

Whilst the rich had the choicer fruits of their own growing, such as the peach and apricot, the nectarine and fig, hot-house grapes and melons, and procured from foreign lands the pomegranate and the pine, the Elizabethan commonalty had an abundance of gooseberries (gorse-berries), currants, strawberries, pears, apples, cherries, out-door grapes, damascene (damson), and other plums. The choicest

pears of Elizabethan England were the Katharine, the Jeneting, the Royal, the Burgomot, the Quince, and the Bishop's Pear. By the way, the earliest to ripen of these pears was called the Jeneting (a corrupted form of June-eating), because in propitious years it was eatable before the end of June. For this reason the botanists styled it "pyrum præcoquum" or "præcocium." On the disappearance of this early pear, its popular name was bestowed on the small early apple still called "the jenetin."¹ The Bishop's Pear, styled by learned gardeners Pyrum Episcopatum, was known to Elizabethan populace as the Bishop's Thumb, a corruption of *episcopatum*, that still survives in our fruit-markets. The Elizabethans had several other pears, including the famous warden, which, besides being made into pies, was baked or stewed, and served in various ways, with syrup or milk-custards. The "Schola Salerni" condemns pears, peaches, and apples as apt to breed melancholy, but Cogan declined to accept that opinion, without defending the fruit unreservedly. "Risted," he says, "baked, stewed, peares are not unwholesome. The great peares, which Virgill nameth Gravia Volema, in English peare-wardens, may be longest preserved."

Whilst the Elizabethan epicure prized the finer species of the cultivated strawberry, the doctors used strawberry-leaves and also the plant's roots in

the medicines. Admitting that strawberries were pleasant to the taste, and on occasions slightly beneficial to the digestion, Cogan insisted that they were hurtful when taken in considerable quantities with clouted cream, even as they were devoured in the strawberry season by Oxonian scholars at Botley, and by citizens at Islington. "Wherefore," says he, "they that goe from Oxford to Botley, or from London to Islington to eate cream, make but a sleeveless errand."

Like her successors of the present day, the Elizabethan housewife was careful to boil down fruit with sugar in Summer and Autumn, and preserve it for use in the long season, when uncooked fruit would be scarce or unattainable, and the commonalty would be subsisting chiefly on salted flesh and bread, without vegetables. Her favourite "preserve" was made of quinces; and it should be observed that we are indebted to the "queen of preserves" for the word *marmalade*, derived from *marmelo*, the Portuguese word for *quince*. Cogan speaks of quince marmalade as though it were marmalade in the strict sense of the word, and having given instructions for making it adds, "After the same manner you may make marmalade of wardens, peares, apples, medlars, cherries, strawberries, yea, and of prunes or damasins, and other plummes. First to boyl them upon a soft fire with

a little faire water, till they be soft, then to drawe them as ye doe a tart, after to boyl them again with sufficient sugar, to dash them with sweet water and endore them." All these various "preserves" or "jams," as they are now-a-days called, were covered in Elizabethan England by the word "marmalade," which at present is applied only to such preserves as are made, or are believed to be made, of lemon-rind or orange-peel boiled with sugar. It is needful to speak thus cautiously of the marmalade of commerce; because the omni-present Dundee marmalade contains a large proportion of boiled carrot, a vegetable whose sweetness spares the manufacturer's sugar-barrel, and whose mild flavour is lost in that of almost any fruit with which it is combined. A very palatable carrot marmalade may be made of boiled carrots, mashed and seasoned with a little lemon-peel and lemon-juice.

Recent horticulture having brought fruit to the highest attainable degree of excellence, and the competition of dealers in garden-delicacies having placed its choicest kinds within the daily reach of fairly affluent epicures, the modern *gourmet* has become of late very particular, not to say fanciful and exacting, with regard to the quality of his fruits. Devouring them gustfully when they are of *super-lative* excellence, he cannot relish them highly when they are only excellent. Indifferent to the fairly

good, he rejects disdainfully those that are distinctly deficient in texture or flavour. Brillat-Savarin tells a story of a deep drinker who, declining to take some proffered grapes, exclaimed angrily, "I thank you; it is not my custom to take my wine in pills." The fastidious epicure, with no preference for grapes in "daughts," is apt to be intolerant of any that fall beneath the highest standard of perfection.

M. Petit-Radel, the chief librarian of the French *Institut*, and sworn degustator of fruit to Louis the Eighteenth, was an epicure with a taste so critical and exacting, that it was seldom completely gratified with the admirable grapes, nectarines, peaches, brought to his judicial palate by the chief gardeners of the Parisian suburbs. On one occasion, however, he was stirred to enthusiasm. He was sitting over an ancient manuscript in his official study, when he heard the sound of voices outside the door. A few seconds later, the door was opened, so that an outstretched hand could exhibit to his gaze an uncovered basket, holding four superb peaches. It was in the middle of a scorching day, and the librarian's appetite for refreshment rose at the delicious spectacle. "Enter, enter," he ejaculated mildly. The owner of the hand and fruit, a famous market-gardener, having obeyed the invitation, M. Radel rose, and without speaking, seated himself in

an easy chair, his legs crossed, his hands put together prayerfully, his countenance exhibiting at the same time curiosity, doubt, and hope. Cutting one of the specimen peaches in four with a silver knife, the gardener maintained silence until, after fixing one of the quarters on the end of his weapon, he had noiselessly approached the scholar. "Taste the water," he observed in a tone of entreaty, as he put the delicious morsel between the epicure's lips. Closing his eyes, M. Petit-Radel was silent for two or three minutes, during which the artiste regarded him with an intense anxiety, that vanished when the degustator, opening his eyes, observed complacently, "Good! very good, my friend!" Placing the second quarter between the librarian's teeth, the gardener said with more firmness, but still with a petitioning accent, "Taste the flesh." Another period of silence, during which the judge was seen to move his mouth slightly in the discharge of duty to his sovereign. Again opening his eyes, M. Petit-Radel remarked with stronger indications of approval, "Ah! very good, my friend, very good!" Taking up a third quarter on the point of his blade, the grower remarked confidently, "Taste the aroma." It was tasted, and declared, "good—*very* good! ah, mon ami, *very* good!" Two minutes later, the candidate for royal notice put the remaining piece on the end of M. Petit-

Radel's tongue, exclaiming triumphantly, "Now, taste the whole." Having obeyed what was an order, rather than a supplication, M. Petit-Radel rose from his seat, and advancing to his visitor with outstretched hands, and the look which is the most eloquent acknowledgment of great services, he ejaculated with suitable effusion from his brightening eyes, "My friend, my friend, it is perfect! it is superb! you have conquered every difficulty. I render you the homage of my sincerest admiration. From to-morrow, your peaches shall be served on the table of the King!"

Some few years since a fine epicure and peculiarly nice judge of fruit was seen loitering near a sunny wall, upon which a pear, of noble shape and a skin that revealed the excellence of the fruit, was arriving at its perfection. The epicure could not be lured from his wall, although he had promised to drive with a friend at that very hour. "My dear fellow," he said, pointing to the pear, "when I made the engagement I had no notion that this pear would come on so quickly. These pears are truly ripe for no more than five hours; and from the commencement of the first hour of ripeness they improve steadily, if the sun is hot, for two hours and a-half, when they as steadily deteriorate till the end of the fifth hour, after which they are fit only for such persons as can enjoy market-fruit.

I must wait here, and catch *that pear* in the very heart of the middle hour. Excuse me, you must pay your visits alone."

So the friend went for a solitary drive, whilst the epicure loitered before the sunny wall till the pear was ripe. In due course the pear attained perfection. For once, the grower's patience and vigilance were rewarded. The pear was of incomparable flavour.

CHAPTER XI.

ORDERING OF FEASTS.

“ Ingenious Lister, were a picture drawn
 With Cynthia’s face, but with a neck like brawn,
 With wings of turkey, and with feet of calf,
 Tho’ drawn by Kneller, it would make you laugh !
 Such is (good Sir) the figure of a feast,
 By some rich farmer’s wife and sister drest.
 Which, were it not for plenty and for steam,
 Might be resembled to a sick man’s dream,
 Where all ideas huddling run so fast,
 That syllabubs come first and soups the last.”

KING’s “ ART OF COOKERY.”

“ A maxim, too, that must not be forgot,
 Whatever be your dinner, ‘ serve it hot,’
 Your fine ragouts, like epigrams, require
 A little salt,—but to be full of fire.”

“ THE BANQUET,” A Poem in three Cantos.

“ TO order” signifies in the first instance to “arrange methodically.” It acquired its secondary meaning, “to command,” from the need of commands for the execution of a design for the systematic arrangement of many things. The ordinary feeder differs from the epicure by omitting to design thoughtfully before he directs authoritatively. In his most self-dependent mood he is a “commander,” but he never rises to the dignity of an “orderer.” Usually he is neither the one nor

the other, but a meek petitioner, who, conscious of his incompetency to "order," forbears to "command," and trusts blindly to the menial controller of his kitchen. Indeed, it is not every *gourmet* who has the knowledge and discretion requisite for an orderer. Not more than one epicure in ten should be trusted to "order" a dinner. "On devient cuisinier, mais on naît rôtisseur," says Brillat-Savarin:—cooks are made, but *artistes* are born. The same may be said of epicures and orderers. Everyone eats; a minority, perhaps five per cent. of civilized humanity may, by culture under favourable circumstances, become epicures; but orderers, like poets, are not produced by education. Begotten under an auspicious star, the orderer enters the world with exceptional endowments.

In the "Physiologie du Goût," Brillat-Savarin says, "L'ordre des comestibles est des plus substantiels aux plus légers. L'ordre des boissons est des plus temperées aux plus fumeuses et aux plus parfumées." Elsewhere in the same work he repeats the same sentiments, so desirous was he to impress them on the student's mind.

Having surveyed the cuisine and banquets of the Old English, the time has come for us to glance at the ordering of modern banquets, and to see how far the arrangements of to-day accord with

ancient practice. But ere we take this concluding survey of the nineteenth century table, let us look again at the Elizabethan board, and turn over a few menus which exhibit the slow progress of culinary art in the seventeenth age.

It is needless to observe that Brillat-Savarin's maxim for the ordering of eatables, was only the precise utterance of a principle generally recognized, though imperfectly obeyed, by our chefs of olden time. In the confusion of meats that distinguished mediæval repasts, we detected a disposition to serve the heavier and cheaper before the lighter and more choice viands. The same rule is observable in the "services" of Elizabethan banquets, which, whilst surpassing the feasts of our earlier ancestors in substantiality, exceeded them also in number and diversity of dishes. Remarking on the variety of viands ordinarily served at the tables of the nobility, Harrison says, "that for a man to dine with one of them, and to taste of euerie dish that standeth before him (which few use to doo, but ech one feedeth upon that meat him best liketh for the time), is rather to yeelde unto a greate conspiracie with a great deale of meate for the speedie suppression of health, then the use of a necessarie meane to satisfie himselfe with a competent repast to sustain his bodie withall." The same writer remarks particularly on the fashion

of English feasters to “begin with the most grosse food, and end with most delicate.”

At the same time, the directly opposite practice prevailed in Scotland, where it had been observed that gentlemen were prone to eat so largely of the earlier dishes, as to have neither appetite nor room for the later viands, which often went untouched from the higher tables to the inferior boards. In which case, the fashion of postponing the more delicate meats to the close of the meals resulted in the disappointment of “quality” and the corresponding advantage of varlets. To secure the best of his good cheer for himself, and leave the worst of it to his servants, the prudent Scot reversed the order of meats, and, eating his game in the *first* course, had a *third* service of beef and pork. “The Scot,” says Harrison, “thinking much to leave the best for his meniall servants, maketh his entrance at the best, so that he is sure thereby to leave the worst.”

To the Scots of feudal time, England was a land of sensuality and wantonness. Just as we attributed our drunkenness and gluttony to the influence of the softish Hollanders, and our wantonness to the vicious example of the French, the Scotch of olden days insisted that all their wickedness was the fruit of English profligacy. According to them, Satan had his proper home and hunting-ground

south of the Tweed, but was continually despatching his emissaries, in the shape of lewd, tippling Englishmen, to poison the morals and kill the souls of the naturally virtuous Northerners. Left to themselves, the Scotch would have been no less chaste and temperate than hardy and courageous. But alas! they were continually wandering from the paths of their primitive righteousness, and pursuing carnal delights at the instigation of the neighbouring people. An English traveller from Dumfries to Inverness could be tracked by the moral defilements which never failed to mark his course through a simple people. After living to middle age a model of domestic worth and social decorum, many a true Scot had become a prodigy of uncleanness during a few weeks' residence in England, whither he had gone in the pursuit of straying cattle. In the middle of the fifteenth century it was believed by the Scotch that wasteful gluttony had never shown itself in their land till James the First, on his return from captivity, planted amongst his courtiers the vicious tastes he had acquired in England. Bishop Wardlaw of St. Andrew's held this opinion; and in his zeal for the suppression of luxury, the worthy prelate induced the Scotch Parliament to prohibit baked meats to all Scotchmen beneath the degrees of gentility. On flesh-days the plebeian Scot might

eat whatever meat he chose provided he boiled it ; but he could not take a cut of “ roast” or “ baked” without sin and punishment. A hundred and fifty years after Wardlaw denounced the luxuriousness of Scottish manners, and deprived the humble folk of baked meat, the Elizabethan table was at the height of its splendour and prodigality.

Like their forefathers of the Plantagenet days, the Elizabethans gave three courses, exclusive of the “entry” and “issue,” at their grand banquets ; but dinners and suppers of only two courses were often served at their tables to large parties. Feasts of two courses were also placed on modish tables throughout the seventeenth century, though Giles Rose, diminishing the number of dishes at each service, doubled the old number of courses. One of his menus is for a dinner of six courses, exclusive of the prelude and the dessert.

Here is a bill of fare from William How’s “ Proper New Booke of Cookery,” (1575) :

First Course.—1. Brawne and mustard. 2. Capons stewed in white broth. 3. A pestle of venison upon bones. 4. A chine of beefe, and a breast of mutton. 6. Three green geese in a dish, sorrel sauce for a stubble goose, mustard and vinegar. 7. (After Allhalowe day) a swan, sauce chaudell. 8. A pigge. 9. A double ribbe of bief^e rosted, sauce, pepper and vinegar. 10. A loyne of veale or a breast ; sauce, oranges. 11. Halfe a lambe or

kid. 12. Two capons roasted, sauce, wine and salt, ale and salt, except it be on soppes. 13. Two pasties of falowe deere in a dishe. 14. A custard. 15. A dish of leaches.

Second Course.—1. Jelly. 2. Pecock, sauce, wine and salt. 3. Two conyes or halfe-a-dozen rabbits, sauce, mustarde and sugar. 4. Halfe-a-dozen chickens upon sorrel soppes. 5. Malarde and teale, sauce, mustarde and vinegar. 6. Gulles and storke. 7. Heronsew, crane, curlew, bittour, bustarde, sauce galentine. 8. Fesand, sauce, water and salte, with onyons sliced. 9. Halfe-a-dozen rayles, sauced as the fesands. 11. A dozen quayles. 12. A dishe of larkes. 13. Pasties of red deere in a dyshe. 14. Tarte. 15. Gensbread. 16. Fritters. In these thirty-one dishes, beginning with brawne and ending with fritters, we have all the materials for a dinner of three courses, with a prelude, though they were badly ordered in only two services.

A cookery-book of a later date of the same reign, “The Good Huswife’s Jewell,” (1597), gives us the following order for a less stately repast.

First Course.—Pottake or stewed broth. 2. Boyled meat or stewed meat. 3. Chickens and bacon. 4. Powdered beef. 5. Pies. 6. Goose. 7. Pigge. 8. Rosted beef. 9. Rosted veale. 10. Custard.

Second Course.—1. Roasted lamb. 2. Roasted capons. 3. Roasted conies. 4. Chickens. 5. Peahennes. 6. Baked venison. 7. Tarts.

The notable feature of this menu is the approach to modern usage in the substitution of “soup” for the ancient prelude of “brawn and mustard.” Though the mediæval “entry” continued to maintain its place throughout the seventeenth century, the Elizabetban practice of beginning dinner with soup was never relinquished.

The author of “The Accomplished Ladies Delight in Preserving, Physick, Beautifying and Cookery,” (1684), gives us the following order for an elegant dinner at Candlemas-tide.

First Course.—1. A pottage with a hen. 2. A Chatham pudding. 3. A fricacie of chickens. 4. A leg of mutton with a sallet. Garnish your dishes with barberries.

Second Course.—1. A chine of mutton. 2. A chine of veal. 3. A lark-pye. 4. A couple of pullets, one larded and garnished with orange-slices.

Third Course.—1. A dish of woodcocks. 2. A couple of rabbits. 3. A dish of asparagus. 4. A Westphalia gammon.

Last Course.—1. Two orange-tarts, one with herbs. 2. Bacon-tart. 3. Apple-tart. 4. A dish of pippins. 5. A dish of pearmain.

This last course was the “issue” or “dessert.” It is worthy of observation that the same writer resembles most of the chefs of his period in using “banquet” to designate a single service of such delicacies as fruits and sweetmeats. For instance, he orders a Candlemas “banquet” thus: “1. A dish of apricots. 2. A dish of marmalade of pippins. 3. A dish of preserved cherries. 4. A whole red quince. 5. A dish of dried sweetmeats.”

The longest, and perhaps most characteristic, of Giles Rose’s “orders” is the following Summer menu of nine courses, *i.e.*, six courses with “prelude,” a service of thick soups, and “dessert.”

“*At the Entry.*—1. Good bread. 2. Good wine. 3. Apricots. 4. Damask plums. 5. The petitz pastez, or little pyes of venison, hot. 6. Talmouses, made of the brain of a capon, minced and baked like cheese-cake.

“*Pottages.* — 1. Boiled and larded venison. 2. Chickens in stove. 3. Bisets or wood-pigeons, with sprouts and young coleworts.

“*First Service.*—1. Partridges with small salt. 2. Hot venison-pye. 3. Young rabbets, also with small salt.

“*Second Service.*—1. Herns, with a bastard-sauce. 3. Levrets. 3. A pye of quails.

“*Third Service.*—1. Soust or pickled meat, with

a cordial sauce. 2. Chickens in sharp-sauce. 3. A pye of widgeons.

“*Fourth Service*.—1. *Estoudeaux au moust*, or stares, that is with a sauce of new sweet wine, or the juice of grapes, squeezed in your hand. 2. *Oyson à la Malvoisie*, or a goose in white sauce. 3. Pullets Faisendez, or mortified like a pheasant.

“*Fifth Service*.—1. Pidgeons with sweet sauce. 2. Venison. 3. Cold venison-pye.

“*Sixth Service*.—1. Pig. 2. Pears. 3. Plaches. 4. Sturgion.

“*At the Issue of the Table*.—1. Three things baked upon a dish. 2. Jelly. 3. Apples.”

This elaborate, and in some respects elegant, repast may be regarded as a fair specimen of the dinners and suppers served at the tables of our courtliest and most luxurious nobles of the Restoration period. The English cuisine, it will be allowed, was making rapid advance to modern perfection when Charles the Second’s cook could design a feast so free from Tudor massiveness, and so devoid of the incongruous combinations and multifariousness of the mediæval repasts. An innovator in the direction of lightness and elegance, Giles Rose was the first English chef to prefer delicacy and grace to diversity and superabundance. A disciple of the French school of artistes who flourished under the patronage of Louis the Fourteenth, he was the first English

cook to serve courses of so few as *three* dishes, his favourite number of viands for a single service.

It has been already remarked that fish was never duly honoured by epicures, so long as they were enjoined to eat it in certain seasons and on certain days, when they were forbidden to touch flesh. It would have been strange if they had not undervalued the meat which the Church regarded as the diet of penance and humiliation, whilst the secular law rated it as an inferior food, which men should be compelled to eat for political ends. In our Catholic period, as we have seen, fish was seldom served in flesh-days, and when it appeared at a flesh-feast it was brought on with the lighter meats towards the close of the repast, as a trivial additament of the service. It was dressed in half-a-hundred various ways; but the cooks who prepared it in so many fashions disdained it as a comparatively cheap and flavourless material. How to make so poor a food highly palatable was the grand problem and difficulty of culinary science. In this respect the Elizabethan artistes and gourmands resembled our cooks and gluttons of earlier time. If they preferred some kinds of fish to other species, they preferred ordinary flesh to the choicest fish. Eating fish under compulsion, they selected the best, or rather what they took for the best, but “bad is the best” was the familiar phrase that ex-

pressed their low esteem for delicacies which they could not appreciate justly. It is singular that the modern practice of serving fish before flesh at the same repast had its origin in the period, when the former meat was in such disfavour that modish and luxurious people were glad to pay highly for exemption from the law, which ordered it to be eaten on all Wednesdays and Saturdays, not falling in Christmas week or Easter week, as well as on the fish-days of the Church.

Enacted for “the maintenance of the Navye,” *i.e.*, for the encouragement of the class which provided sailors for the Commonwealth, the Statute, 5 Elizabeth, c. 5 (1562-3), ordered all persons to abstain from flesh, and content themselves with fish-diet on three days of the week, and also on all days “usually observed as fishe days.” The penalties of disobedience to this law were heavy. For every offence against its orders the offender was liable to a fine of three pounds (say £30 of Victorian money), or close imprisonment, without bail or mainprise, for three months. But the rigour and comprehensiveness of the Statute’s eleventh section were greatly modified by subsequent clauses. A “lord of the realm” might buy exemption from the new law by an annual payment of twenty-six shillings and eightpence to the poor-box of the parish. On the same terms his lady could purchase

the privilege of eating flesh on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The same exemption was accorded to a knight or his lady for an annual payment of thirteen shillings and fourpence, and to any person beneath the knightly grade for a yearly offering to the poor-box of six shillings and eightpence, paid within six days after the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary. In case of illness, any person could obtain exemption from his parish priest by means of a special license, granted for eight days, and renewable on every eighth day throughout his disorder, the only charge for such license being a fee of fourpence to the parish registrar, who recorded the exemption in the Church Book. Yet further, by section 22 of the Statute, it was enacted that on all fish-Wednesdays one flesh-dish might be served at any table with every three "competent usual dishes of sea-fishe," provided such fish-dishes were put on the board *bonâ fide* for actual consumption.

One of the most characteristic sections of this curious enactment provided " That whosoever shall by preaching, teaching, writing, or open speeche, notifie that any eatinge of fishe and forbearing of fleshe mentyoned in this statnte ys of any necessitye for the saving of the soule of man, or that yt ys the service of God, or otherwise than as other politike lawes arre and bee, then suche person shall bee punished as spreaders of fause newes are or ought

to bee." That is to say, they should be whipped by the parish beadle, put in the stocks, or thrown into prison.

The twenty-second section of the law had a notable effect on the ordering of English dinners. Whilst the rich avoided the new impositions of fish-diet by annual payments, the lowest of which exceeded £3 of Victorian money, the commonalty and needy persons of quality availed themselves of the permission to have one flesh-dish at their Wednesday meals for every three fish-messes. Hence arose the general practice of serving both kinds of viand at the same table. The fashion of serving the fish before the flesh arose at the same time. To show that he had no disposition to abuse the relaxing clause, by substituting a diet of flesh for one consisting chiefly of fish, the Elizabethan housekeeper caused the "three competent dishes of sea-fishe" to be set on the table at the beginning of dinner or supper, and refrained from flesh till they had been honestly distributed and eaten.

The fashion, which thus arose from orderly submissiveness to Elizabeth's enactment, has never disappeared from the English table. It created in our fairly prosperous households a taste for fish, as a light and appetizing prelude to flesh, that gradually asserted itself in the higher and wealthier classes, till it became in the eighteenth century a point of

gentility to open every dinner with a service of the delicate food which delighted the palates of gastronomers, as soon as religion and law had ceased to force it down their throats.

Under the influence of chefs who followed in the steps, whilst improving the method, of Giles Rose, our table assumed its modern order in the earlier half of our Georgian period. In the later decades of the last century the English epicure's dinner consisted of soup and fish for a prelude, a course of "made dishes," a second course of joints and "solids," and a third of game and sweets, followed by a dessert. The "made dishes," or *entrées*, which old-fashioned folk derided as "French kick-shaws," and "mere gallimawfreys," were prepared from the receipts of French chefs, who practised their art in the kitchens of our nobility. But in respect to their "made dishes," these foreign artistes should be regarded as restorers of the old English cuisine, rather than as importers of Continental inventions. Most of the "novelties" were things of mediæval contrivance, that had been common cheer at our Plantagenet tables.

Whilst regarding its order, the enlightened epicure has no difficulty in referring to their historic sources the principal elements of the English dinner. The soup is old English, a term synonymous with Roman for the purpose of this survey. The prac-

tice of eating fish at “the entry” is Elizabethan, though it was popular long before it was fashionable. Old English influence is conspicuous in our *entrées*, especially in those that are made of minced or pounded viands. Highly-seasoned curries, for instance, are emphatically old English fare, though our nabobs of the last century are commonly believed to have brought them, with other stimulating preparations, from the East. Whilst their colour reminds us of the rage for yellow which prevailed throughout the saffron period of our cookery, their name preserves the old English term for “culinary practice.” For seasoning their dishes of minced meat, the chefs of the “Forme of Cury” had two curry, or *curry* powders—the *forte* and the *douce*—from which the highly-seasoned messes derived their special appellation. Our joints and solids are Tudor; but the fashion of carving them in thin slices is of the Stuart or post-fureine period. In our sweets and fruit dishes old English influence is dominant. Modern elegance and luxury are prominent in the dessert, which, however, had its germ in the old English after-course. Block-ice was introduced by the epicures of the Restoration; cream and water-ices came to us from France in the last century.

The English reader may conclude this survey of our modern table by reflecting with pride that,

whatever its shortcomings, the English cuisine has enjoyed for centuries a high reputation on the Continent for richness and refinement. Whilst he relished the fare given him in this country, Hentzner was of opinion that the Elizabethan English were more “polite in eating than the French.” Misson, who lived chiefly amongst our citizens of middle rank, thought meanly of our culinary address; but he admitted that our nobility fostered the “generous art,” and fared with French delicacy. Towards the close of the last century, French cookery was not more liberally encouraged in London than English cookery in Paris. Half a century since, the great Ude wrote of us, “I will venture to affirm that cookery in England, when well done, is superior to that of any country in the world.” And only the other day, M. Urbain Dubois, the Emperor of Germany’s chef, declared in his “Artistic Cookery:” “It is a fact worthy of notice that, in England, culinary art is more cultivated than in any other country.” Dubois accounts for our gastronomic zeal and culinary pre-eminence by arguing that the excellence of our *materiel*—especially of our mutton and beef—has affected our gastronomic morality, by rousing in our breasts a superb ambition to render justice to such incomparable viands. He insists that though “sheep are diffused all over the world,” the Continental epicure, who would ascer-

tain all the delicious possibilities of mutton, should pursue his inquiries in this country. So also of beef, he observes :—“ It must be acknowledged that it is only in England it meets with the care and attention it requires, and where the foresight and sacrifices necessary to ensure its perfection are properly understood.”

CHAPTER XII.

COOK-SHOPS AND CLUB-HOUSES.

"La Révolution, en ruinant tous ces anciens propriétaires, a mis tous les bons cuisiniers sur le pavé. Dès-lors, pour utiliser leur talens, ils se sont faits marchands de bonne-chère sous le nom de Restaurateurs. . . . Cette révolution dans la cuisine et la fortune de ces restaurateurs habiles tient encore à deux autres causes ; la manie de l'imitation des mœurs anglaises (car les Anglais, comme l'on sait, mangent presque toujours à la taverne), et cette subite inondation de législateurs sans domicile, qui, finissant par donner le ton, ont entraîné par leur exemple tous les Parisiens au cabaret."

—ALMANACH DES GOURMANDS. 1803.

"Maturer age to this delight grown strange,
 Each night frequents his club behind the 'Change,
 Expecting there frugality and health,
 And honour rising from a sheriff's wealth ;
 Unless he some Insurance dinner lacks,
 'Tis very rarely he frequents Pontacks."

DR. KING'S "ART OF COOKERY."

WHERE should we look for facts to justify M. Dubois' high opinion of our cookery? Scarcely in our club-houses, where, though it never falls below average goodness, the "generous art" seldom rises to the highest degree of excellence. Still less in our public dining-rooms, where, in the absence of critical patrons and competent professors, it has languished for half a century, and in the last twenty years has sunk to the low level of a vulgar industry.

To our opprobrium, it must be confessed that there is no Continental capital so poorly provided as London with establishments where the stranger may obtain a fairly good dinner for a small sum, or an excellent dinner at a great price. In the western districts of the town, millionaires and spendthrifts may fare delicately, as well as sumptuously, at the few private hotels which draw their prodigious profits from a small class of luxurious and opulent visitors. But to test the capabilities of the chef, retained in any one of these exclusive and decorous taverns, it is necessary that the curious inquirer should take an apartment, and attain the status of a guest "staying in the house." Even when he places a coffee-room at the service of casual visitors, the keeper of a private hotel is little studious to please the caller who only "drops in for dinner" before going to the opera. London has also a few large hotels where the stranger may dine sufficiently, if not *well*, for twice the sum that he would pay for a much better meal at a second-class Paris restaurant. But apart from these few and unsatisfactory places that cannot be easily discovered by travellers unfamiliar with the town, what accommodation does London offer to the thousands of persons who, in default of invitations to private tables, must take their food and drink from public caterers? What are her hospitable arrangements for foreigners in

lodgings, country cousins who do not care to dine every day at their hotels, and the hundreds of clubless bachelors who inhabit chambers in the east-central and west-central districts?

They have a choice of houses where dinners are provided for casual customers. There are the old-fashioned chop-houses, whose arrangements were excellent for the persons who frequented them in the last century, though very discordant to the usages and taste of the present period. There are the antiquated hotels of the Covent Garden quarter and the principal thoroughfares between the City and Hyde Park, in whose dingy coffee-rooms gentlemen may get a substantial dinner from the joint and a pint of inferior wine for eight or ten shillings. The Strand and Fleet Street have several long, low, dirty rooms, where economical feeders, seated on the narrow benches of a dozen or more little pews, satisfy their hunger with plates of meat and vegetables, in the din and heat of company three times too numerous for the space. There are also the modern, flashy, pretentious dining-rooms, where, in salons splendid with cheap gilding and fly-flecked plate-glass mirrors, a weary mortal may get a piece of fish, a cut from a luke-warm joint, and a bottle of thin claret at a charge for which he could procure a really capital dinner in Paris, though the prime cost of *matériel* is almost

as high in the French capital as in London. But no one can dine well and comfortably at any of these establishments. To avoid extortion, the diner must expose himself to heat, noise, offensive company, and the irritations of a villainous cuisine. To dine on decent fare, in a room sufficiently large for the company, and in an atmosphere of proper temperature and purity, he must submit without a murmur to the considerable exactions of the food-tariff, and the scandalous exactions of an impudent *wine-carte*.

In this respect modern London compares disadvantageously with old London. The bravest and merriest gentlemen of the town frequented the Elizabethan ordinaries, where persons of every honest degree met and talked over the bountifully furnished tables. In Charles the Second's London every important tavern had its daily *table-d'hôte*. At the same time, the town had such luxurious restaurants at Chattelin's and Pontacks, and ruder cook-shops where the visitor could select his cut from any one of twenty joints, turning on the spits before the kitchen-fire. "Generally," says Misson of these places, where lords of the realm would take a snack with their tradesmen, and merchants would dine sociably with clerks, "four spits, one over another, carry round each five or six pieces of butcher-meat, beef, mutton, veal, pork, and lamb;

you have what quantity you please cut off, fat, lean, much or little done; with this, a little salt and mustard upon the side of a plate, a bottle of beer, and a roll; and there is your whole feast." One can readily imagine the shortcomings and discomforts of these sociable cook-shops, but no frequenter of them could complain of the diversity and choice of meats.

All that can be said of the liveliness and freedom of the Elizabethan and Caroline *tables-d'hôte*, may be affirmed of those ordinaries of the eighteenth century, whose humours divert the readers of Steele, Fielding, and Smollett, even more than they amused Mr. Spectator and Sir Roger. The cook-shops may have suffered from the gradual development of coffee-houses and establishments for eating; but the ordinary flourished long after the Georgian coffee-room — unlike the earlier coffee-houses whose arrangements justified their name—was the habitual dining-place of its customers. At present the Georgian coffee-room, where coffee was seldom served, may appear deficient in lightness and space. We are disposed to wonder how our great-grandfathers contrived to "sit at their ease," for hours together, on its narrow, straight-backed forms. Together with the taste for the fruity wines put on its small tables, we have lost the taste for its too solid cuisine. But its arrangements were in

harmony with prevailing notions of comfort, when gentle-folk delighted in the cosiness of little rooms, and were trained to think it effeminate to repose on sofas and lounge-chairs. Moreover, it should be remembered to the credit of these places of reunion, that like the coffee-room of Dryden's day, the Johnsonian coffee-room was the centre of every masculine coterie, and the favourite resort of scholarly or modish men of all the higher social grades.

In the earlier years of the present century London could boast that it had never possessed a better supply of dining-houses. Whilst such suburbs as Highgate, Hampstead, and Chelsea, and such outlying places as Greenwich, Putney, Twickenham and Richmond, were known for taverns that provided good dinners and excellent wine, the town abounded with inns and restaurants where the cookery was perfect in some particular way, if not in every way.

In "the city" the epicure had Birch's in Cornhill for turtle, or he could get a mid-day snack of cutlets and asparagus, or sandwiches and sherry at Garraway's in Change Alley, beneath the sale-room where West Indian estates and other property were sold by candle-auction. "At the commencement of a sale," says a describer of the coffee-house, alike famous for its luncheons and its early interest

in the tea-trade, “when the auctioneer has read the description of the property and the conditions on which it is to be disposed of, a piece of candle, usually an inch long, is lighted, and he who is the last bidder at the time the light goes out is declared the purchaser.” But for his dinners—when he had no invitations to feast with aldermen or company, and was not disposed for a costly meal at the Albion, in Aldersgate Street—the civic epicure relied chiefly on the chop-houses of his part of the town. Dolly’s chop-house, in a quiet passage midway between Newgate Street and Paternoster Row, the house where Dr. George Fordyce dined daily for more than twenty years of his studious and rather glutinous career, may be mentioned as a specimen of these “city houses,” where meat of the finest quality was cooked with exquisite skill.

Similar houses could be counted by the dozen in the immediate neighbourhood of the Inns of Court. It is enough to allude to such houses as the Cheshire Cheese, the Mitre, the Rainbow, and the Cock, whose “plump-faced waiter” (of a later period) was very indignant on hearing that he had been “put into a poem.” But though their larders and cooks were honourably known, these taverns of the Temple district are scarcely so celebrated in gastronomic annals as in the history of toping.

Always a "late house," the Cock coffee-room was something later than usual on the nights when a new member was elected to "The Philosophers," a club of learned and tippling sages who, sixty years since, used to meet every evening in a particular box.

Going westward from Chancery Lane, the epicure in search of a good dinner might attain his object at the Hercules Pillars, in Great Queen Street, directly opposite the Freemasons' Tavern. Or he might pause in his course towards the Covent Garden Hotel, and glance at the bill of fare which Mr. Jupp had placed in the coffee-room of The Queen's Head. A daring innovator, Jupp was the first of British publicans to serve his parlour-guests with spirits in small pewter measures. "Waiter," a gentleman, with a husky voice and shrill note in it, exclaimed to one of the Queen's Head servitors, "*One more half-quartern and then I'll go.*" The waiter was running to execute the order, when another gentleman with a still huskier voice and even shriller note in it, called out viciously, "*And bring me another whole quartern, for by Heaven! mean to stay!*" The hearers laughed after the fashion of tavern-haunters sixty years since, long and loudly; and from that evening the two measures were known to Mr. Jupp's customers as "*a go*" and "*a stay.*"

If Mr. Jupp's menu could not induce him to stay, our wandering epicure could go further westward, and find at intervals of a hundred yards a series of well-managed dining-rooms. His route from Covent Garden to Bond Street passed the doors of some of the best restaurants of the town. The Sablonière, named after the Parisian chef, La Sablonière, was daily thronged by *gourmets* who preferred it to the several other French houses of Leicester Square. May-Fair had at least a dozen establishments where her dandies could dine fairly or sumptuously by the *carte* or at well-appointed *tables-d'hôte*. Gover's Coffee-house in Brook Street, and Mount Coffee-house in Grosvenor Street, were famous for their dinners. The same may be said of the "Prince of Wales," in Conduit Street, and "Thomas's" in Bruton Street. Bond Street had half-a-dozen dining-houses, such as Molloy's Tower Hotel, the Blenheim Coffee-house (a "very aristocratic house" when Fosbury kept it in the Waterloo year), and the Green Man, described by the author of "The Epicure's Almanack," as "fashionable but cheap." But though they dined at the Green Man when their ready money was running short, modish gentlemen did not like to be seen coming out of a place so decidedly inferior to "the Blenheim." "When you come out," says the particular snob of the period, who compiled "The Epicure's

Almanack," (1815), "you of course mix with the lounging, well-dressed mob, and not a soul will surmise that you have not dined at a sumptuous *table-d'hôte*." Gunter in Berkeley Square served dinners to gentlemen of quality on his premises, before the development of the club-house system deprived him of the most lucrative part of his original business.

At the present time, no loiterer about town would walk northward from Pall Mall to seek a pleasant dinner at a tavern or *traiteur's* shop near Manchester Square. But sixty years since the neighbourhood of this square, on the north of Oxford Street, abounded with cooks and confectioners of high credit in gastronomic circles who, whilst "sending" dinners "in" to the houses of their patrons, were keepers of public eating-rooms. Indeed, Manchester Square was emphatically *the* quarter for French dinners. Parmentier, whilom confectioner to the Prince Regent and Dukes of York and Kent, had his place of business at 9, Edward Street, Manchester Square. Romualdo (the Signor) flourished at 29, Duke Street, next door to Morin, the superlative excellence of whose cuisine was attributed chiefly to the attention he paid to the health of his "tasting" cooks. "The dinners," a contemporary author observes of M. Morin's treatment of his servants, "are cooked by French artistes, who are at stated

times carefully physicked and dieted, in order to preserve their palate in all its delicacy of tact. This is a most essential precaution, not sufficiently attended to by our Amphitryons, as the frequent chagrins over dinners overdone or underdone palpably demonstrate." The writer adds, "The wines are excellent, Monsieur and Madame Morin being natives of France!" Another of the French cooks of this district was Monsieur Romaingoux who, besides entertaining customers at his own residence, condescended to officiate as occasional chef in private families. Romaingoux lived at 36, George Street, where he had for a near neighbour Mohammed, "the native of Asia," who was incomparably great in curries, and kept an eating-house for nabobs and other connoisseurs of Oriental cookery.

A considerable proportion, perhaps the majority, of the French cooks established as restaurateurs in London at the opening of the present century, had studied the mysteries of their art in the kitchens of the *ancien régime*, whose chefs and culinary traditions were scattered over the earth's surface by the revolutionary tempest. Pleasant stories could be told of the fidelity with which some of these cooks served without fee, and shielded from destitution the masters whom they had followed into exile. For the *few* French

chevaliers who, like M. d'Albignac, supported themselves in this country by culinary practice, there were *many* who were saved from abject need by the exertions and generosity of their former kitchen-servants.

At the opening of the present century, London had only three of its existing club-houses, White's, Boodle's and Brooks's. The "Alfred" was established in 1808, the "Guards" in 1810. The next thirty years of London's story were alike remarkable for the rapid extension of the club-house system, and the rapid decadence of cookery at public dining-rooms. In 1840 the town had twenty west-end clubs. The great co-operative movement was not more beneficial to younger sons than injurious to gastronomic interests. By withdrawing from the public dining-rooms precisely the class of customers who were best able to stimulate and reward the ingenuity of cooks, the new clubs were disastrous to the London restaurants. Whilst the keepers of our best eating-houses fell into bankruptcy or urgent difficulties from the desertion of their most liberal patrons, their cooks languished from want of sympathy and critical praise. A single trade, or rather let us say the flower of a single profession, suffered from co-operation then, just as all the retail traders of the town are suffering from it now. The French

houses north of Oxford Street died out one after another. Gloom and wretchedness settled on the hotels of Leicester Square, which from being the haunts of our richest *gourmets* became mere eating-houses for exiles. At the same time the May-Fair restaurateurs put up their shutters, or adapting themselves to the new order of things made strenuous efforts to drive a larger trade, as confectioners and providers of rout-suppers and wedding-breakfasts, whilst they ceased to serve dinners on their premises.

Whilst cookery for the public has languished under the cold shadow of the clubs, the culinary art cannot be said to have flourished in the joint-stock palaces. The conditions and influences of the club-system check the zeal and lower the ambition of cooks, who more than all other artistes need the stimulus of sympathy and commendation. The club-cook is the servant of a committee, proverbially the coldest and least conscientious of employers, and however desirous it may be to foster gastronomic art, a committee can never detect a chef's merits so readily, or acknowledge them so aptly and seasonably as a single ruler could do.

On first entering the service of a club, the young and ardent chef may strive for the appreciation of his new patrons. He may cherish a lofty purpose

of extending the bounds of his art, and of making his kitchen a nursery of rising artistes. But this enthusiasm soon disappears under the annoyances and depressing circumstances of his position. The committee accepts his efforts as a matter of course. Now and then it may give him a phrase of formal commendation, when he has glorified a house-dinner with a new invention, or lavished super-human energies on a ceremonious banquet. But for every time when he thus extorts a frigid acknowledgment of his merits, there arise a dozen occasions when he is summoned before his special "board" to answer some groundless complaint from a dissatisfied, because dyspeptic, diner. Your habitual club-grumbler is largely accountable for the failings of the kitchen which he thinks to reform and elevate by his querulousness. When he chuckles over the apparent success of his last "complaint of the general badness of the dinners," and congratulates himself on having got the cook "another wiggling from the committee," the grumbler should be informed that a "wiggling from the committee" only disheartens an honest chef, instead of "whipping him up," and that whilst extinguishing all generous zeal in his breast, it only tends to make him more studious to avoid blame by mediocre efficiency than to extort homage by superlative success.

Again, our club-cooks suffer from the want of that rivalry which stimulates the chefs of competing restaurateurs to surpass one another in skill and inventiveness. However exceptional his endowments, the chef seldom raises the number of dinners ordered at his club. Even when it disposes a few members to dine at their club more frequently than they would otherwise do, his excellence cannot affect the life of other joint-stock houses. He is, therefore, denied the triumphant excitements of the chef whose renown draws to a public restaurant the ancient supporters of rival establishments.

Chilled by his committee, harassed by his grumblers and hopeless of fame, the club chef, if he perseveres in a thankless office, soon becomes a mere artiste of routine. He may escape frequent censures by the general fairness and evenness of his cookery, but he never wins, and seldom merits, the applause of connoisseurs.

It is needless to add that to justify his high opinion of our cookery, M. Dubois would point to the tables of those members of our affluent classes who are of opinion that to "live wisely" it is needful to "live well."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FOLK-LORE OF FEEDING.

"To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

SOLomon's "PROVERBS."

"La découverte d'un mets nouveau fait plus pour le bonheur du genre humain que la découverte d'une étoile."—BRILLAT-SAVARIN'S "APHOBISMS."

"ENOUGH is as good as a feast" holds a chief place amongst proverbs in favour of moderation, though a perverse epicure argued from it that anything less than a feast could not be enough. The philosopher who originated the adage left too much to individual discretion; for whilst a feast is an uncertain measure, learned authorities differ as to what amounts to enough. When little Oliver asked for more, he was supposed to have had "enough," though the general sentiment favoured his demand. In seeking how much constituted a feast in olden time, we derive no assistance from the maxim, "There is little difference between a feast and a belly-full." For bellies are of various capacities. When the Abbé de Voisenon was directed

to drink a quart of ptisan every hour, he protested pathetically to his doctor, "Ah, my friend, how can you desire me to swallow a quart an hour? *I hold but a pint.*" On the other hand, the famous glutton of Kent, elevated by Fuller to a place amongst the worthies, could devour with ease at a single meal thirty dozen pigeons, and rise with an appetite from a repast consisting of "fourscore rabbits and eighteen yards of black pudding, London measure." Moreover, the adage is less an utterance of popular wisdom than the brutish sentiment of some dull glutton who, caring chiefly to gorge himself, was indifferent to the quality of his food.

Another of our familiar adages in favour of temperance is, "Eat to live, but do not live to eat," a sentiment which so astounded a French epicure that he exclaimed, with a look of amazement, "Mon Dieu! what on earth then should we live for?" In the same class should be placed such wholesome maxims as, "Much meat, much maladies," "More meat, less manners," "Spare dinner, spare doctor," and "Too much pudding will choke a dog." Another version of the order to keep the doctor off by habitual moderation at table is, "Feed sparingly, and defy the physician."

Akin to these adages in favour of temperance are the maxims which prefer a homely diet, with contentment, to the luxurious fare of high tables. Folk-

lore declares “Dry bread at home is better than roast meat abroad,” a statement deficient in truth, whether it be taken literally or figuratively. Some poor fellows, like Jeremy Taylor’s hen-pecked husband, have found dry bread abroad better than roast meat at home. In like manner we are told, “A bean at liberty is better than a comfit in prison,” whereto the distressingly prosaic Lord North is said to have remarked that he should not care to eat a comfit out of prison, a critical objection to be coupled with that of another lover of plain speech, who, on hearing it said “He that eats the king’s goose shall be choked with the feathers,” confessed he could not see how that could be, as the feathers of a goose were never brought to table. It may be left to the antiquaries to dispute whether this adage of warning against the perils of intercourse with monarchs dates from the time when the king’s goose, like his peacock, was often served in its hackel. The proverb which declares the goose a foolish bird has been mentioned in an earlier chapter.

Some of the old sayings about meals are unsocial, whilst others are of sordid meanness. None but a churl was the first to remark, “Scald not your lips with another man’s pottage,” as though a friendly meal at a neighbour’s board must necessarily occasion harm ; and none but a sponging parasite struck

out the miserly saying, “The wholesomest meat is at another’s man’s cost,” a mode of regarding hospitality, by-the-by, which Sheridan relieved of abject niggardliness, and clothed with piquant humour, when he said he could drink with advantage any “given quantity” of wine. Again, there is scarcely more of truth than of swinish voracity in “The belly is not filled with fair words,” which is only an unmannerly version of “Apologies butter no parsnips,” and “Great boast and small roast make unsavoury mouths.”

The disorder and defective service which usually distinguished the grand feasts of olden time are commemorated in such proverbs as “There is no great banquet but some fare ill,” and “The more the merrier, the fewer the better cheer.” But however large the company, or scanty the provision, at least one humble contributor to the merriment received proper attention. The ubiquitous fiddler had his proverbial “fare: meat, drink, and money,” whoever else was put off with short commons. Of mirth, by the way, there was seldom any deficiency at the popular festivals of olden time. “Better be meals many than one too merry,” observed a philosopher who had learnt from experience that excessive hilarity was apt to generate broils.

Whilst folk-lore urged men to be moderate

feeders for their health's sake, it was not less particular in commanding abstinence for economical reasons. "A fat housekeeper made lean executors;" and "A fat kitchen, a lean will." At the same time it was better for a man to ruin himself by lavish hospitality and incessant feasting than by extravagance in costume. "Silks and satins put out the kitchen fire." "To pinch the belly in order to flatter the back," was derided by our forefathers as a course of egregious vanity that Frenchmen might take, but Englishmen should avoid.

Some of our old sayings about particular meats convey good counsel, or illustrate ancient usages of the table, though it must be confessed that a few of them fail to support the assertion that a proverb is the wit of one man and the wisdom of many. Notice has already been taken of the wholesome advice given in "He that would live for aye must eat sage (or salad) in May." There is truth in the adage, "Like lips like lettuce: a thistle is a salad fit for an ass's mouth," another version of which is "A donkey likes thistles, because he is an ass." But one is at a loss to discover either wit or wisdom in "Butter is gold in the morning, silver at noon, lead at night." And how comes it, if butter is depressing at night, that an egg, whose yolk is a ball of oil, should be recommended for eating at the same time, as it is in "An egg and to bed." Why a man

should take an egg before going to bed, or go to bed immediately after taking an egg, is a question still to be answered. Lord Dundreary suggests “That he may hatch it,” a suggestion worthy of that nobleman’s sagacity, though not quite satisfactory. That bread-and-butter was no highly esteemed diet in olden time may be inferred from “They that have no other meat, bread-and-butter are glad to eat,” the wit and wisdom of which remark may be supplemented with the well-known saying of the Princess of France, who held that when they could not get bread, people should make shift with cake. “That which will not be butter, must be made into cheese,” must have originated in Suffolk, long infamous for its hard, horny, flet-milk cheeses, which Swift called “cart-wheels,” and farm-labourers designate “bang.” Another food for humble folk is honoured in the saying, “Good kail (*i.e.*, pottage) is half a meal,” and “Poor folks are glad of pottage.” With more of justice to plain, than of gallantry to well-looking women, proverbial philosophy teaches, “Prettiness makes no pottage,” a sentiment that would be unobjectionable, were it not for a spiteful insinuation against the pretty girls who, in language which Lord Justice Knight Bruce might have used, may rejoin, “But to make good pottage it is not necessary that a woman should be ugly.” To the honour of deer’s flesh, and in apology

for inferior viands, our ancestors used to say, “All flesh is not venison,” a sententious truism whose style was borrowed from “All flesh is grass,” which Lady Lytton parodied with “All man is beast,” in a novel that she wrote to the annoyance of her husband. The one small grain of truth which lurks in the great lie, “The nearer the bone the sweeter the meat,” appears in the fact that the outer slice of a roast is drier and less tasteful than the interior meat. The adage, however, is in favour with domestic economists who like to scrape every scrap of food from their ribs of beef, and who, of course, approve the saying, “When the shoulder of mutton is going, it is good to take a slice.” A different opinion was held of this poor joint by the club-swell who, in one of “Punch’s” old volumes, observed languidly that he had always thought it the material used for making glue. More humour and critical knowledge appear in the statement, “A shoulder of veal has twenty and two good bits,” i.e., twenty-two pieces, of which only two are good. All the cuts of leg of mutton were esteemed, except one, the first, “The cut that is worst of a leg is the first.” The love of solids, and the corresponding disdain for whipped sillabubs and other frothy trifles, are expressed in “There’s no deceit in a bag-pudding.” “Two plum-puddings are better than one,” cannot be older than the beginning of the

eighteenth, or the end of the seventeenth century, when plum-puddings first became universally popular. It is needless to remind the reader of Misson's remarks on the English passion for pudding, which gave birth to the phrase, "In time for pudding," *i.e.*, for dinner. But the best of all our ancestors' saws about pudding is the second line of the couplet, in which a practical cook declared her contempt for the rules and theories of cookery-books,

"Oh, bother your books and all their receipting,
The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

After pudding comes cheese, and, says proverbial wisdom, "After cheese comes nothing," an adage which might have been adduced in illustration of our remarks on the service of cheese at dessert. "Bread with eyes, and cheese with eyes" must have attained proverbial dignity in the days of universal prejudice against unleavened bread, and general ignorance of Gruyère cheese.

Though old folk-lore admitted that "a bit in the morning was better than nothing all day long," and that a diet of light meals taken frequently was efficacious for bringing the lean to condition ("Often and little eating makes a man fat"), it seldom spoke civilly of mere "snacks," which none but children should be encouraged to take:—"A child and a

chicken must always be picking." Sayings of modern folk-lore, "If I were to fast for my life, I would eat a good breakfast in the morning," and, "He that would eat a good dinner, let him eat a good breakfast," are probably not older than the eighteenth century. The meals honoured by folk-lore were dinner and supper, the mid-day dinner, after which the husbandman *rested awhile* before resuming his labour; and six o'clock supper, which he followed up by *running a mile* to call on his neighbours, or join in the sports of the common-green. The dinner, especially commended by frugal makers of proverbs, was a meal of few dainties and short duration:—"Dinners cannot be long where dainties want." In their meanest and most parsimonious temper they would add, "He that saveth his dinner will have more for supper." It was of the six o'clock supper that folk-lore remarked, "Who goes to bed supperless, all night tumbles and tosses." Our grandfathers knew right well that the rear-supper was not conducive to "sweet repose."

Folk-lore is especially didactic, and slightly on demeanour at table. "Meat is much, rs are more," said the proverbial wise- insisted that at meals children—not children, but all persons whose parents ns were present—should be "seen and

not heard." Even the elders of a party were enjoined to be orderly and discreet in their speech. "It was good to be merry at meat," but good manners enjoined people to be *wise* as well as *merry*. Uproarious hilarity was highly reprehensible. "None," said the mannerists, "but fools and fiddlers sing at their meat." "Cease your chitter and mind your platter," and "The ass that bays most eats least," were two of several sayings by which they taught people to refrain from superfluous conversation, whilst performing the most serious business of the day. There were times at table when a wise man should be slow to speak, but none when he should be slow to satisfy his hunger. "Never be ashamed to eat your meat." It was good manners, and at the same time good policy, in a host to give the tit-bits of a joint to the guest who had contributed it to the feast—"Who gives the capon, give him the leg and wing," or, according to another version of the same rule, "The wing with the liver for him who's the giver." It was execrably bad manners for a company to eat up all the fare, leaving nothing for the servants. "He," says an old saw, "can give little to his servant who licks his own trencher." The remnants of a feast, which came as official perquisites to the servants, were called "manners;" and they were rated as "good manners," or "bad manners," in

proportion as they exhibited consideration or disregard, on the part of the feasters, for the feelings and just claims of servitors. It was bad manners to take the last piece but one from a dish; and *extremely* bad manners for a guest to take the very last. The spinster, guilty of the former offence, would not marry for a year; guilty of the latter outrage, she would die an old maid, and afterwards “lead apes in hell.” Jack Sprat and his wife were an harmonious and mutually accommodating couple; but they were vulgar people. Had they lived in good society, the one might have loved fat and the other have loved lean, but they would not have licked their platters clean.

Housekeepers were admonished to “go early to the fish-market and late to the shambles,” in order to get a good choice of the more perishable food, and buy odd pieces of flesh-meat for a trifle more than a song. Cooks were told that “fish make no broth,” a saying which must have arisen in a recent time, for, as we have seen, the old English were habitual makers of fish-potage. They were also instructed that “he who would have a hare for breakfast must hunt overnight,” by which maxim, for the benefit of improvident housekeepers, we are reminded of the sentiment which cannot be found in Mrs. Glasse’s “Cookery Book.” Prudence and contentment are inculcated by the adage, “If thou

hast not a capon, feed on an onion ;" and whilst telling people to cut their clothes according to their cloth, and to live within their means, folk-lore urged them to be content with thin porridge if they could not afford thick. At the same time, when they had abundance they might fare abundantly, "He who hathe much pease may put more in the pot." In restraint of profuseness, the common fault of hosts in the olden time, folk-lore said, "New meat needs new appetite." It had also excellent maxims for cooks, who were enjoined to be clean, good-tempered, and mindful of their fires, which should be clear and smokeless. "He who boils his pot with chips, makes his broth smell of smoke." There were only three things that a nice feeder might take from a cook, deficient in the virtue which Wesley placed next to godliness : "An apple, an egg, and a nut, you may eat after a slut." Whilst ladies were bound to keep their tempers "e'en though china fell," the model cook was required to be cheerful under every mishap and vexation. She might not "cry over spilt milk," or wax impatient at the churn. She was told, "Don't swear, or the butter won't come." The pot would never boil if she stood over it fretting and fuming because the liquor was so slow to "simper" and bubble : "The watched pot boileth not." The only sharp and sour thing about her should be the

sauce which she puts to sweet meat; “Sweet meat must have sour sauce.” Folk-lore even went so far as to declare “Good cooks always have good tempers,” an egregiously untrue statement, for clever and zealous cooks, like all nervous workers whose employment involves much anxiety and frequent disappointments, are a highly irritable class. As a general rule, it may be asserted confidently that good cooks never have perfect or fairly smooth tempers. Acting on this rule as though it had no exceptions, a famous epicure, on examining candidates for the vacant chiefship of his kitchen, used to open each examination with the inquiry, “Have you a good temper?” If the candidate replied “yes,” the questioner rejoined, “Then be off with you; for you can’t be a good cook.” In defence of his process, this eccentric epicure used to say, “Good cooks *always* have execrable tempers; and, what is more, they are so proud of their defect that nothing would induce a competent chef to avow himself a good-tempered fellow.”

For the most part a rigid, and even stingy, economist of good things taken from larder and buttery, folk-lore, with all its dislike of wastefulness and its disposition towards frugality, now and then affords us a liberal maxim. For instance, whilst respecting the rights of servants to manners, it tells

us to “Take heed of enemies reconciled and meat twice boiled.” From another of its precepts it may be inferred that the parsimonious housekeeper had better serve his recooked meats in the first course. The *réchauffé*, which opens a feast, may escape suspicion and even win approval; for, says folk-lore, “the first dish pleaseth all.”

CHAPTER XIV.

EPICURES.

“La digestion est l'affaire de l'estomac, et les indigestions sont celle des médecins.”—ALMANACH DES GOURMANDS.

“La table est le seul endroit où l'on ne s'ennuie jamais pendant la première heure.”—PHYSIOLOGIE DU GOUT.

“Je veux que la mort me frappe
 Au milieu d'un grand repas;
 Qu'on m'enterre sous la nappe
 Entre quatre larges plats,
 Et que sur ma tombe on mette
 Cette courte inscription,
 ‘Ci-gît le premier poète
 Mort d'une indigestion.’ ”

“AUSSITÔT QUE LA LUMIÈRE.”

“LE plaisir de table,” says Brillat-Savarin, “est de tous les âges, de toutes les conditions, de tous les pays, et de tous les jours ; il peut s'associer à tous les autres plaisirs, et reste le dernier pour nous consoler de leur perte.” If the sterner sex has furnished us with the most brilliant examples of devotion to good cheer, not a few women have distinguished themselves by epicurean daintiness. Though fastidious gulosity exhibits itself most strikingly in riper age, the appetite for food, naturally active in vigorous and quickly growing

creatures, is sometimes united in tender children with precocious discernment and significant enthusiasm. There are parents who on moral grounds foster daintiness in their nurseries, arguing that children are less prone to gluttony in proportion to their taste for elegant "gourmandise."

Grimod de la Reynière mentions with approval a little girl who, on hearing her father question whether hearty eating was more productive of happiness than dainty feeding, observed gravely and thoughtfully, "For myself, papa, I prefer to be dainty, for so I preserve my hunger." The sire had cause to exult in the child who could see thus clearly that hunger should be trifled with rather than satisfied, that it was a blessing to be preserved rather than an inconvenience to be extinguished. So intelligent and temperate a damsel can scarcely have been the sister of the greedy little boy who, according to Brillat-Savarin, wept bitterly and loudly towards the close of a grand meal. "My dear boy, what is the matter?" asked one of the elder guests at the table. "I cannot eat any more," responded the young glutton. "Well, well," rejoined the senior gourmand pitifully, "dry your tears, my brave lad, and fill your pockets." Instead of deriving comfort and diversion of thought from this kindly suggestion, the sufferer, uttering a yet louder wail of anguish, exclaimed, "I can't, I can't, they are full

already." By the way, a version of this story may be found in a memoir of Beau Brummell by a serious tract-writer who, having treated the incident as an occurrence of the Beau's childhood, insists that the boy's subsequent frivolity and worldliness were the logical results of the parental indulgence which only laughed at the greediness that should have been corrected with a whipping.

Brillat-Savarin insisted that "gourmandise" was becoming in women. Agreeing with the delicacy of their organs, it gave them liberal compensation for certain pleasures denied to their sex. He maintains that a lovely woman never looks more lovely than when "under arms," sitting in full toilet at a brightly-furnished table, and putting between the mobile lips of her saucy mouth the viands and wines that, raising at the same time the brilliancy of her eyes and the warmer tints of her delicate complexion, animate her to scatter sparkling railleries around her during the intervals between courses.

Alexandre Dumas was scarcely justified in attributing Eve's great disobedience to gastronomic desire, but he had sufficient authority for placing Queen Anne of England amongst modern women famous for their patronage of the "generous art." Whilst our cookery-books of the eighteenth century preserve this sovereign's culinary services from oblivion by their receipts for made dishes and

sweets “after Queen Anne’s fashion;” one of the unfeminine propensities attributed to her by scandalous gossip is commemorated in the saying which, with piquant reference to the position of her statue before St. Paul’s Cathedral, likens the habitual tippler to “Queen Anne, who turns her back on the church, and looks towards the wine-shop.” Champagne was the favourite wine in which Her Majesty is said to have indulged with habitual freedom. In justice, however, to this queen of proverbial deadness, it should be observed that the impeachment of her sobriety is sustained by no conclusive evidence. Free-livers delight to attribute their own failings to great people who are free from them. Till Lord Stanhope relieved Pitt’s fame of groundless aspersions of drunkenness, it suffered from Porson’s drunken epigrams, and the idle tales of pot-loving detractors. In like manner Friedrich Wilhelm the Fourth of Prussia, who, to use Mr. Hepworth Dixon’s words, while eating (on account of his malady) enough for a giant, drank no more than a child, suffered from the inventions of the malicious humour that nick-named him Cliquot, and proclaimed him the greatest drunkard of Europe. Possibly, Queen Anne’s posthumous renown as a petticoated toss-pot is due to the wit of some French tourist in London who, after visiting St. Paul’s, wrote a saucy paragraph about the royal lady, “qui

tourne le dos à l'église et qui regarde le marchand de vin." Anyhow, her fame in this respect would have fared none the worse had her statue looked towards the tea-shop at one, instead of the public-house at another corner of the churchyard.

Whilst preserving the libellous proverb against our queen, the Parisians have also a similar saying to a saint's discredit. When their best restaurants stood in the *Rue aux Oies* (corrupted to Rue aux Ours) the Parisians used to say of any *gourmet*, "Voilà un homme qui a le nez tourné à la friandise, comme Saint Jacque de l'Hôpital," because the saint's statue over the entrance to the hospital looked down the traiteurs' thoroughfare.

Whilst ascetic scholars have invented half-a-hundred offensive definitions of "gourmand" and "gourmandise," philologists, with a taste for material pleasures, or with proper charity for human frailties, have exercised no little ingenuity in explaining the terms with equal precision and courtesy. In the "Synonymes," the Abbé Roubaud distinguished between the "gourmand," the "goinfre," the "goulu," and the "glouton." Disdaining to contemplate the excesses of these three last-named species of devourers, gastronomy concerns itself only with the interests of "the gourmand," of whose pursuit Brillat-Savarin remarks, "'Gourmandise' is the exercise of judgment, by which we accord preference to things that

are agreeable to the taste, over things that lack this quality." But according to Grimod de la Reynière, to merit the lofty appellation of "un vrai gourmand" it is necessary that a man should be something more than a large consumer and intelligent connoisseur of good cheer. "Your true *gourmand* is not merely one who eats with profundity, choice, reflection, and sensuality, who leaves nothing in plate or in glass, who never wounds his host with a refusal, or his neighbour with sobriety. He should unite with a vigorous appetite the jovial spirit, in whose absence the best feast is but a mournful sacrifice. Ever quick at repartee, he should hold in continual activity all the senses with which a bountiful nature has endowed him. Lastly, his memory should be stored with a multitude of anecdotes, stories, and amusing tales, which he brings forth in the intervals of the courses, and the brief pauses between meats, so that his less indulgent companions may, perforce, pardon his appetite." Dividing the epicures of the polite table into three distinct species, later writers distinguish between the *gourmand* proper, who is alike exacting of quantity and quality, the *gourmet* who, with no power to assimilate a vast measure of nutriment, is far more gustful than voracious, though indifferent to quantity, and the *friand*, who surpassing the *gourmet* in delicacy of palate and in physical intolerance of

massive refreshment, derives all his delights from tit-bits and subtle flavours. Of course it is often difficult to decide to which of these classes an epicure belongs. The *friand* will sometimes dine as heartily as a *gourmet*, and in certain moods the *gourmet*, unmindful of his physical limitations, will execute feats of "true gourmandise." At seasons of sorrow, or of harassing anxieties, a *gourmand* may be mistaken for a *gourmet*, or even for a *friand*.

Possessing all facial signs of a true *gourmand*, mentioned by Brillat-Savarin, broad face, sparkling eyes, small forehead, full lips, and round chin, Monsieur Aze possessed in remarkable perfection all endowments that Grimod de la Reynière required in a *bon-vivant*. To an almost insatiable appetite and incomparable digestion, he united a fine wit, a fine palate, and fine manners. To this remarkable man we are indebted for the Gastronomic "Code," the excellence and justice of whose provisions are apparent even to those who would not venture to enforce them. It was Monsieur Aze who decreed that to fail in keeping an engagement for dinner was an offence for which the delinquent should forfeit five hundred francs to the disappointed host. By giving forty-eight hours' notice of his inability to fulfil his engagement, the offender might, however, reduce the penalty of his breach of promise to three hundred francs. Another of this legislator's enact-

ments forbade a guest to slander his host, until a certain time had elapsed since his regalement, the time for forbearing from defamatory speech varying in proportion to the goodness of the repast. By a fairly good dinner, an Amphitryon could purchase security for eight clear days from the slanderous proclivities of the guests at his table. By a repast of superlative excellence, he could extend the period of safety from lying tongues to six months. But no dinner, however costly and complete, could oblige a guest to refrain for more than half a year from the pleasure of calumniating its giver. Thus by entertaining all his friends once in every six months, a competent and lavish host could maintain a blameless character in the circle of his private acquaintance. As M. Aze justly observed, it is impossible to conceive a more agreeable process for achieving an equally difficult and desirable end. An utterer of many wise sayings, M. Aze demonstrated his title to be honoured as the prophet of the dinner-table, when he observed in a happy moment that it was better to get drunk on wine than on ink, because the former was less black.

It is noteworthy that whilst epicures of the highest order are always persons of considerable intellect, some of the world's brightest geniuses have been signally devoid of gastronomic percep-

tion. Though he was a great eater, especially of breakfasts, Walter Scott's palate was so devoid of sensibility, that he preferred cold whisky and water to the most delicate wines, and could relish inferior viands as keenly as meats of the finest quality. With the exception of Leigh Hunt and Tom Moore, England has not produced during the last hundred years a single author, chiefly famous for his poetry, who may be named amongst eminent epicures. When he was not impairing a naturally delicate constitution with drastic medicines and protracted fasts, Byron would sometimes eat and drink excessively; but he ate like a greedy schoolboy, and drank sottishly. Shelley cared more for fruit than the masterpieces of cookery. Southey was content with a joint and potato: Wordsworth fared throughout life as simply and moderately as a school-girl, and would have refused with scornful disgust an invitation to eat for the sake of eating. Had he been thrown with epicures in his early manhood, Coleridge might have developed a taste for delicate feeding that would have defended him against the particular sensuality which torpefied his palate, long before it exhausted the sources of his nervous energy.

Strenuous exercise of the brain may be regarded as hostile to the physical conditions that generate gastronomic faculty. Though men of letters are

seldom averse to material pleasures, and are generally credited with a disposition to social indulgence, literary biography affords but few examples of sincere devotion to gulosity. Theodore Hook and free livers of his hilarious type must be classed with the convivial topers, rather than with the nice connoisseurs of good cheer. Johnson used to question the man's judgment on more important matters whom he found indifferent to eating; and it was his vanity to think himself an epicure. But the doctor's gastronomic experiences were homely and inartistic. Often a glutton, and never a nice feeder, he showed himself no "vrai gourmet" by his inability to see that eating was the highest of all subjects. Our finest *gourmets* of the literary class have been such amateurs of letters as "Anastasius" Hope and Plumer Ward, who merely played with the pen instead of living by it. A few of our regular authors have, however, been genuine *gourmets*. Lord Lytton and Thackeray, for instance, were gastronomers of a high order. The same may be said of the author of "The Art of Dining," who possesses in a remarkable degree all the mental, moral and physical endowments of the polite epicure.

Brillat-Savarin was of opinion that whilst practical *gourmets*, and persons qualified by nature for gastronomic excellence, could be recognized at a

glance by the physical signs already mentioned, it was easy to distinguish people naturally incapable of the finer enjoyments of gust, by their long faces, long noses, large eyes, and slimness of bodily formation. “Whatever their height,” he says, “they always have in their *tournure* a character of elongation. They have black and straight hair, and are, above all, deficient in *embonpoint*: it is they who invented trousers. The women whom nature has afflicted with the same misfortune are angular, get tired at table, and live on tea and scandal.” Though not devoid of justice and nice observation, these assertions must, however, be regarded as general statements, to be modified by numerous exceptions.

The author of the “Physiologie du Goût” divided his gastronomic “incapables” into two classes—the persons with tongue and palate “badly provided with nerves for inhaling and appreciating flavours;” and the persons who, whilst suffering under no local defect analogous to blindness and deafness, cannot concentrate their attention on their food, by reason of their general excitability or their inordinate devotion to other interests. This second class includes trivial chatter-boxes, men of urgent affairs, highly irritable natures, and everyone who is less the master than the slave of a morbidly active brain.

The first Napoleon, by turns abstemious and gluttonous, was denied the pleasures of the high “gourmandise” by his irritability and devotion to affairs. He would work in his cabinet for many hours without taking food; and then to appease an appetite, which never made itself felt without requiring immediate satisfaction, he would burden himself with large meals, devoured ravenously. Indigestion necessarily resulted from this savage practice; and the mind that subdued the Continent was often clouded by the derangement of organs which avenged their wrongs on the brain that had insolently denied them proper consideration. It is not more obvious to Victor Hugo that Waterloo was lost through the fall of rain which hindered the movements of the French artillery, than manifest to gastronomers that some of the great captain’s darkest reverses are attributable to his barbarous maltreatment of his stomach. His success at Borodino would have been unquestionable, had the chieftain been prudently submissive to his chef. Leipsic would not have been lost had the great “*tête d’armée*” rendered proper homage to the source of its vigour. The triumphs of Dresden would not have closed in disaster, if the Emperor had not stupefied himself with shoulder of mutton and onion-sauce.

Unlike Napoleon, the cold and wary Wellington

did not neglect his health in his devotion to supreme interests. Eating moderately but sufficiently throughout his campaigns, he never lost field or gun through dyspepsia. But he was even more averse than the Emperor to epicurean indulgence. No cook ever won from him a sign of satisfaction with a dish. The natural infirmity of his tongue and palate rendered him absolutely indifferent to the flavours of viands. "Thank you, it was good enough; but I really don't care what I eat," he replied to an inquiry for his opinion of a dish so superlatively excellent that his host Talleyrand (or, as some insist, Cambacérès) was perplexed by the silence and unobservant air of the courtly soldier. "Not care what you eat!" he rejoined, with undisguised astonishment, "not care what you eat! Then, why on earth have you come here?" A version of this anecdote, which has been told in a score different ways, may be found in Lord Lytton's "Pelham."

But though he was no *gourmet*, and was disastrously neglectful of his personal interest in good cheer, Napoleon had a proper respect for cookery as an instrument of government. On despatching the Abbé de Pradt to Poland, he observed impressively, "Tenez bonne table et soignez les femmes;" and the supreme duty of his famous arch-chancellor Cambacérès, was to maintain a kitchen and table

for the furtherance of state affairs. On dismissing high plenipotentiaries, after a satisfactory conference, he would say in his most gracious manner, “ Go and dine with Cambacérès.” In illustration of prodigal expenditure for the arch-chancellor’s table, a story is told of a trout sent to it from Geneva, for which the municipal authorities of that city charged 300 francs. Thinking that £12 (of English money) was an extortionate price for a single trout, the Imperial *Cour des Comptes* disallowed the payment; the immediate result of which interference was a sharp reproof from the Emperor, who bade his officers of the *Cour* to forbear for the future from vexatious economy in matters pertaining to his chancellor’s table. Had the Emperor been as considerate as he was liberal to his official entertainer, the latter would have been spared many annoyances. But the autocrat, who gave no heed to the clock or his own bodily needs, when affairs of moment occupied his attention, was equally careless of his chancellor’s feelings and hospitable arrangements. Sometimes Cambacérès was summoned abruptly to the Tuileries within a few minutes of the hour fixed for a grand dinner at his own table. At other times, he was detained at the palace for hours, whilst he knew that his cook was deplored the destruction of an exquisite repast, and that his guests for the day were enduring the torments of hunger. On one of

these occasions, when the course to be taken with the Duc d'Enghien had been the subject of tedious discussion at the Council Board, Cambacérès was seen to pen a hasty note and give it to a gentleman usher for immediate delivery. Unfortunately, the chancellor's act did not escape the notice of the Emperor, who desired to know the contents of the missive. With an affected air of unconcern, Cambacérès explained that the note referred only to a private and personal matter; but the assurance, far from satisfying the Emperor, only stimulated his curiosity. So the note was handed to His Majesty, who read it aloud, "Gardez les entremets, les rôtis sont perdus." It is needless to add that the billet was directed to the arch-chancellor's chef.

It was an hour of evil consequence to the arch-chancellor's fame, when he was so imprudent as to differ with Carème on a question of account, and rouse thereby the implacable resentment of that eminent artiste. Had he exhibited to Carème a little of the forbearance which he never failed to display to his Imperial master, Cambacérès might have gone down to posterity as the finest *gourmet* of the first Empire. But alas! for a reputation so laboriously achieved, and so intemperately squandered over a paltry dispute about a few hundred wretched francs, it is questionable whether Napoleon's official entertainer

was aught better than a gluttonous and niggardly impostor. No man is a hero to his valet. No man lives in the esteem of the cook whom he has discharged with imputations of dishonesty. If Carème may be credited, the arch-chancellor was no true gourmand in the true sense of the term, but only a gross, and even voracious feeder (*fort gros mangeur, et même vorace*). A greedy devourer of highly-seasoned and vulgar messes, he gorged himself with dishes only calculated to disgust the refined epicure. “Pourrait-on croire,” exclaims Carème, “qu'il préférerait à tous les mets le pâté chaud aux boulettes, plat lourd, fade et bête ?” Every morning of his life this gastronomic humbug expended curious care on the arrangement of his table, but only with the despicable purpose of cutting down its proper expenses, for the gratification of his avaricious spirit. He kept a minute record of all culinary provisions sent to him from the provinces, as though he were a mere huckster. He kept the key of the larder in which they were stored, and never gave out a head of game, a fish, or joint of meat without a frugal consideration of its weight and the requirements of the occasion on which it would be served. Often, out of sheer miserliness, he kept *matériel* under lock and key till it was unfit for consumption. Even worse, he would consume at his solitary dinners the “remains” of stately ban-

quets. "Just heaven!" the cook exclaims, with equal fervour and amazement, "what a dinner for a prince and eminent gastronomer!" Not that Carème disdained to utilize the remnants of a feast. On the contrary, he was ever ready to turn them to account, but with caution and in secrecy. "La desserte," he justly observes, "ne doit être employée qu'avec précaution, habileté, et surtout *en silence*." The same ham was served at the arch-chancellor's board day after day for an entire week; and the miserable fellow grudged the chief officers of his kitchen the refreshment of a bottle of Bordeaux. Of course the reader of these accusations must make large allowance for the accuser's prejudice and vehement animosity. But though they are violent *ex parte* statements, it cannot be denied that they proceed from a witness who was singularly qualified to form a correct estimate of the arch-chancellor's gastronomic pretensions, and who would have been slow to tarnish his own fame by covering a former patron with charges which "society" would know to be altogether false.

Carème contrasts the meanness of Cambacérès with the liberality of George the Fourth, Lord Castlereagh, the Emperor Alexander, and Talleyrand. If his spirits were depressed by the clouds and fog of our humid climate, they were cheered by the considerateness and courtesies of his English

patrons. In Russia he was, or imagined himself, an object of especial concern to his imperial employer and the august circle, for whose delight he produced his finest and most original compositions.

But Talleyrand was the *gourmet* whom Careme delighted to honour, as the first gastronomer of Europe and of history. The general opinion of culinary *savans* concurs with the cook's high estimate of this princely diplomatist and feeder, whose dinner taken with composure—at eight o'clock when he was in Paris, and at five during his residences in the country—was his only meal in the course of each twenty-four hours. Having drunk at the opening of the day two or three cups of camomile tea, which acted as a gentle tonic on his digestive organs, the Prince received the many persons who had claims on his attention. When he had dismissed the diplomatic agents and politicians who thronged his *levée*, he summoned to his cabinet the chief officers of his kitchen, and deliberated calmly on their proposals. If their suggestions involved any startling project, or even any trivial modification of a gastronomic rule, each of the assembled artistes was invited to state his opinion on the doubtful question fearlessly and frankly. It was not till he had heard the arguments on both sides that the Prince delivered judgment in

language which, though excellently lucid and precise, was studiously devoid of expressions likely to wound the susceptibilities of the gentle ministrants. Sometimes he condescended to taste a new sauce, or witness the practical illustration of a new culinary method; but on these occasions he barely tasted the novelty, lest, whilst informing his palate, he should blunt the edge of appetite.

A similar picture has been given of Louis, Count Zinzendorf, the bearer of a name scarcely less illustrious in gastronomic story than in the annals of pietism. Unlike the Count of his family who afforded the Moravian brethren an asylum in Upper Lusatia, and after introducing their doctrines to England died at Chelsea in 1760, the statesman and epicure of this story was more studious for his body's pleasure than his soul's welfare. For many years he kept the best table in Vienna, and during the plenitude of his influence he always spared an hour of each mid-day for a conference with his chief cook. For her knowledge of this interesting fact, history is indebted to the prying tourist who, by bribing one of the Count's pages, gained access to the dark closet, where he witnessed the following drama through the keyhole of a door. The spy saw a stately chamber in which the Count was walking to and fro, his arms crossed over his breast, and his countenance wearing a meditative air. Having

paced the room's length several times, the great Minister unfolded his arms, and seating himself in a lounge-chair that stood in the middle of the room, rung a silver hand-bell. A minute later there entered a page, bearing a glass and a white napkin; a second courtly servitor, carrying a silver salver, that was furnished with several pieces of bread; and a famous chef, carrying another salver on which were several vessels containing the gravies and sauces selected for the Count's dinner. When the page had put the napkin over the Count's cravat and coat-lappets, and the footman had taken a convenient position near his master, the chef brought up the sauces, one by one, stating briefly as he presented it the special purpose for which each was designed. Having tasted each of the compounds, and conferred gravely with his chef on their characteristics as well as on other questions of culinary moment, the Count returned to affairs of state, and to the quarter of his palace where he received his visitors. The spectator of this droll scene tells us that the Count was very careful to clear his palate with bread and water after tasting a sauce, so that he might render critical justice to the next preparation.

A man of patrician connexions, Grimod de la Reynière was of plebeian birth. The nephew of Malesherbes, and the uncle of Count D'Orsay, he was the son of a *fermier-général*, who purchased

nobility when he had amassed a prodigious fortune, and the grandson of a pork-butcher whose highest distinctions were won in his inglorious vocation. A malicious destiny decreed that a furious hog should avenge the wrongs of his race on the person of this pork-butcher's grandchild. The future epicure and editor of the famous *Almanach des Gourmands* was still an infant, when he was deprived of the greater part of both his hands by the savage boar. That he could, on attaining manhood, conceal the disfigurements consequent on this accident from casual observers, was not more due to the ingenious contrivances of surgeons, than to the intelligence and perseverance with which he trained the mutilated parts to muscular pliancy. But the injuries which he strove to disguise excluded him from the profession of arms. Forbidden by a cynical fate to wield the sword, he comforted himself by learning how to use a pen and handle a knife and fork. The successes of the writer and epicure are more brilliant, and promise to be more enduring than any he could have achieved in military service. Whilst his gastronomic inventions place him in the first rank of discoverers, his gastronomic writings have long been the marvel of scholars and the model of scribes. The Duke, whose wisdom and virtues are fitly commemorated in our capital by the column that bears his name, used to declare that, with the

single exception of the Bible, the world contained no better book than the “Almanach des Gourmands.”

It may seem ungenerous to allude to the failings of so great a benefactor of our species; but generosity should not fail in thoughtfulness even for those who are strangers to the virtue. For their satisfaction, therefore, let it be observed that Grimod, faultless in everything which relates to feeding, was not perfect in every relation of life. The incongruity of his ancestral humility and parental opulence infused him with a perverse humour, often observed in the inheritors of a fortune that just falls short of perfect felicity. It had inspired him with more of animosity to the immediate authors of his life, than of gratitude to them as the creators of his enviable prosperity. Certainly, he cannot be exhibited to young minds as a model of filial devotion. Whilst his parents, after the fashion of the newly-enriched, ranged themselves with the obsequious worshippers of the aristocracy, the younger Grimod declared himself a child of the *canaille*, and displayed whimsical ingenuity in reminding his father and mother of their vulgar extraction. It was his pleasure to bring ridicule on them by burlesquing the awkward gestures with which they rendered servile homage to the great people who condescended to enter their salons. The father had scarcely performed an obeisance to a duke of ancient lineage when the

son would divert a circle of spectators by approaching the dignitary with bowings and grimaces that caricatured the *fermier-général's* movements of reverence.

Whilst the old people prided themselves on the patrician quality of the guests who thronged the reception-rooms of their hotel, their son persisted in parodying their entertainments by inviting to his apartment, in the same mansion of the Champs Elysées, persons of plebeian style and story. On one occasion he invited a numerous party of advocates to his table, requiring that each of his guests should give proof of his plebeian birth to a laquais, stationed at the door of the *salle-à-manger*, before entering the festal room. On another occasion he entertained twenty-two of his friends at a supper served on a catafalque in a chamber hung with black cloth, and lit like a mortuary chapel with three hundred tapers. On entering the first of the anterooms that led to this chamber of death, each guest was asked by a Swiss in attendance whether he had come to dine with M. de la Reynière (père) “l'opresseur du peuple,” or with M. de la Reynière (fils) “le défendeur du peuple.” On declaring contempt for the tax-gatherer, and devotion to the popular tribune, the guest was permitted to go to his place at the

catafalque, where he found an open coffin placed behind each seat.

But the younger De la Reynière's most scandalous banquet was the supper of pork and oil which he gave to the tailors, butchers, and other petty tradesmen of his father's neighbourhood. The supper comprised nine courses, each of which afforded a dish of swine's flesh, or a viand dressed profusely with oil. Savoyards, taken from the streets and dressed for the occasion in the gorgeous habiliments of mediæval heralds, waited at the table, whilst surpliced singing-boys, stationed at the four corners of the *salle-à-manger*, swung to and fro the gilded censers, whose fumes corrected the less agreeable odour of the glutinous *canaille*. No service was removed till the defender of the people had taken occasion to call attention to some piece of *charcuterie*, as meat bought at the shop of one of his cousins, or to commend the oil of another preparation as a favourable specimen of the commodities sold by his father's brother, the *épicier* round the corner. This fooling was at its height when Monsieur and Madame de la Reynière, having arrived prematurely in Paris from the country, burst into the room where their son was amusing himself, in more than one sense, at their expense.

In his indignation the *fermier-général* procured a

lettre de cachet, that banished his son to Lorraine, whence the young man returned to Paris after the lapse of a few months to take possession of the wealth which had devolved on him by his sire's death. In palliation of his unfilial buffooneries, it has been suggested that the younger De la Reynière perpetrated them from motives of policy, rather than from an unnatural desire to inflict pain on his worthy parents. Anticipating the not remote future, when the lower *bourgeoisie* of the capital would be powerful to defend a fortune derived from odious taxes, he may have courted the *canaille* in the interests of the father and mother whom he covered with ridicule. Anyhow his offences against their peace of mind were advantageous to himself. The millionaire who had boasted of his descent from a line of pork-butchers, when ordinary *parvenus* blushed to avow their familiar connection with the rabble, was allowed to retain his wealth after the men of the markets had risen to power. Whilst the ancient nobility were stript of their possessions, the tax-farmer's son, who blushed for his father's affectation of patrician quality, and boasted of his grandsire's shop, escaped the general despoliation of the opulent classes.

Avoiding the excitements and perils of political contention, he reposed on his reputation for loving the people and “good cheer.” Directing the gas-

tronomic revolution, which his pen has described with graphic picturesqueness, he lavished money and counsel on the cooks who, on the demolition of the kitchens of the noblesse, established themselves as public *traiteurs* in the Palais Royal. Under the Empire he published his famous "Almanach." On his return from exile, Louis the Desired, found him in the fullness of his well-earned renown. Time dealt gently with the *gourmet* who, accommodating himself amiably to successive governments and changes of national sentiment, was more curious about pots than politicians. When he entertained his nephew (Count D'Orsay) and Alexandre Dumas with a charming dinner in 1834, the illustrious epicure, who had in his youth suffered exile for a libellous memoir of Fariau de Saint-Ange, was in the full enjoyment of a green old age. As his hair had whitened, his palate had attained a riper and finer subtlety. His digestion was perfect. To use the noble words of one of his many biographers, he still ate a *pâté de foie gras* as though it were a *brioche*, and swallowed *truffles* as though they were *cherries*. A few years later he languished; but to the last he preserved a romantic passion for aliments. The malady to which he eventually succumbed having constrained his physician to put him on a severely restricted diet, he was

ordered to dine off a single egg and one slice (*mouillette*) of bread. The venerable *gourmet* insisted that the egg should be large and the *mouillette* enormous. Consenting to his entreaties, the affectionate wife who shared the labours, triumphs, and honours of his useful career, provided the meagre repast in accordance with his directions. Regarding the *mouillette* with admiration, and his wife with gratitude, M. Grimod de la Reynière seized the egg, removed a part of its shell, and was in the act of sucking up the milky “white,” when, alas! he sucked so energetically—one might say greedily—that he drew the entire meat between his lips. In an instant he had swallowed the yolk without tasting it. “Oh, malheur! Oh, déplorable précipitation!” says the historian, “la belle mouillette était inutile.” The venerable gastronomer could not conceal his chagrin. Still worse, his exhausted energies could not recover from the shock of the humiliating disappointment. A week later he expired, leaving his works for the enlightenment, and his character for the emulation of posterity.

CHAPTER XV.

POLITICAL GASTRONOMY.

“Le gouvernement Anglais, que nous copions, si positif, si puissant et si vivace, a gagné considérablement d'influence sur le parlement par les dîners.”—L'ART CULINAIRE. Par le Marquis de Cussy.

“Je n'ai pas grande idée de cet homme, disait le comte de M——, en parlant d'un candidat qui venait d'attraper une place; il n'a jamais mangé de boudin à la Richelieu, et ne connaît pas les côtelettes à la Soubise.”—PHYSIOLOGIE DU GOUT.

WHILST holding Grimod de la Reynière in proper reverence, as the leader of the Parisian gastronomers for more than half a century, we should also bear in mind that he was surrounded by worthy comrades and generous rivals. Brillat-Savarin was his close friend. Who is ignorant of M. D'Aigrefeuille, whilom Procureur-Général de la Cour des Aides de Montpellier, to whom Grimod dedicated the first volume of his “Almanach?” A volume might be written on his achievements in gourmandise. The inventor of the *potage* that bears his name, he introduced “langues de bœuf à la vénitienne” to the Parisian table, and induced Baptiste to reveal the method of preparing them. The discoverer of a new process for dressing macaroni, he sometimes condescended to execute it with

his own hands for the delight of a few familiar witnesses of his skill. "Qui ne sait," Grimod remarks with fervour, "que vous possédez mieux qu'aucun amateur la recette des meilleurs macaronis : et que quiconque a mangé de ceux que vous daignez quelquefois apprêter vous-même, et de vos propres mains, pour vos amis, ne peut plus en gouter d'autres."

Who has not heard of M. d'Avaray and his method of cooking meats within meats, so that the viand intended for consumption should escape the hurtful, whilst encountering the salutary influence of the fire? Having placed a nicely trimmed and seasoned cutlet between two larger portions of tender flesh, he grilled or fried the savoury "triplet," from which the *gourmet* in due course took for his own eating the middle slice, putting aside the outer pieces, as though they were the mere shell or rind of a delicious fruit. In the same manner he cooked the ortolan, without scorching it, by putting it into the belly of a partridge, ere he submitted it to heat. The *gourmet* who could conquer difficulties by expedients so novel and elegant, deserved his place in the affections of his sovereign.

The age of D'Avaray, D'Escar, and Petit-Radel was also the age of De Cussy, whose "L'Art Culinaire" endures comparison with the "Physiologie du Goût," and the most thoughtful essays of the

“Almanach.” Prefect of the Palace under the Empire, the Marquis de Cussy studied eating as a department of political science, and insisted that history should be written from the gastronomic point of view. To know the peoples, it was necessary to know their dishes. England should be criticized with continual reference to roast-beef, beef-steak, pudding, and porter. Holland could be understood only by a connoisseur of cheese and salt-beef. The genius of Germany lurked in sour-krout and sausages. Caviare afforded the clue to the mysteries of Russian policy. The “pilau” of Turkey, the “macaroni” of Italy, and the “olla-podrida” of Spain revealed the respective instincts and tendencies of the three nations. According to De Cussy, dynasties rose or fell through sympathetic devotion or sullen indifference to culinary ideas. The disasters of history were referable to dinners; and the student, who would account for the successes of statesmen, should pay more attention to the records of their kitchens than to their labours in the cabinet. The free institutions of England were the result of her liberal though rather oppressive fare: her supremacy was the work of statesmen and thinkers who, in addressing the minds, had never forgotten to humour the stomachs of their followers. Walpole governed by corruption and cookery, so nicely blended that it was impossible at times to separate the one from

the other. Holland, Chatham, North, and Addington were all statesmen of the table. Locke, Addison, Clarke, Hume and Gibbon were not more eminent as philosophers than as diners.

To readers who have never taken the gastronomic view of our parliamentary history, De Cussy's statement of the influence of hospitality on our public affairs may appear altogether fanciful; but the more enlightened perusers of this page do not need to be assured that it has an element of truth. Baptized in the loving-cup, if not born amidst revelry, government by party was quick to employ feasting as a means for the attainment of its ends. Banquets were given for political purposes—to proclaim the exultation of victors, or rally the spirits of defeated confederates—long before the time of Walpole, who only followed the example of earlier leaders, when he rewarded his staunch supporters by inviting them to his table, or won new recruits to his army with domestic blandishments. In the “Examen,” Roger North tells us how for their political objects “the court and their friends came and kept company with the friendly citizens, encouraging them and countenancing them,” and how the triumph of the civic Tories, in electing two sheriffs of their party, was celebrated with “great and solemn feasts,” whose “no little noise gave advantage to the Whigs,

that liked not such music, to charge the Tories with brutality and extravagance."

If not heard for the first time, the "huzza" was first adopted as a Tory cry at these rejoicings over Whig misadventure. "It cannot be denied," says Roger North, "but at merry meetings good fellowship, in the way of Healths, ran into some extravagance and noise, as that which they call Huzza-ing, an Usage then at its perfection." Thirty years later the populace of Queen Anne's town were raising huzzas for Dr. Sacheverell at feasts commemorated in Dr. King's lines

"A caldron of fat beef and stoop of ale
On the huzzaing mob shall more prevail,
Than if you give them, with the nicest art,
Ragouts of peacock's brains and filbert tart."

At the same time the Whigs, no longer protesting weakly and foolishly against clamorous extravagances, answered their opponents' shouts with even louder "hurrahs." Alike in the capital and the country, political action was attended with political feasting. No election was carried without a lavish expenditure in meats and buttered ale. No candidate for the suffrages of a large constituency could face it on the hustings until he had met its chiefs at private dinners, and conciliated its superior commonalty at tavern suppers. Having passed from privacy to a public station through a series of

feastings, the new member no sooner entered “the house” than he was assailed with hospitable courtesies by notable politicians, acting in the interest of ministers or of their opponents. By going straight to one of the chief houses of rendezvous for the holders of his opinions, and declining to appear at the private gatherings of their opponents, the man of clear views and steady purpose easily escaped the importunities of anglers for his influence. But the weak-knee'd politician, after sauntering through half-a-dozen coteries, was apt to associate himself closely with the one that had the best cooks and prettiest women. As Mr. Hayward observes, when speaking of the political functions of Holland House and Lansdowne House, “No one who knows anything about human nature will deny that it is of the last importance to a party to have a few noble or highly distinguished houses, where all its rank and beauty, wit, eloquence, accomplishment, and agreeability may congregate; where, above all, each young recruit of promise may be received on an apparent footing of equality, his feelings taken captive by kindness, or his vanity conciliated by flattery.”

De Cussy lived in times when the English mode of cherishing political parties was largely operative in French politics. The dinners of Cambacérès in the Empire, had been preceded in the Republic by

the hospitalities of Barrère, whose table was not more esteemed for its cuisine than for its political intelligence. During his ascendancy it was commonly said that no one could understand the revolution, who had not supped with the President of the Jacobins; and whilst the kitchen was a chief force in the organisation of every political coterie, gastronomy contributed in a remarkable manner to the prosperity of the entire nation. Brillat-Savarin insists that France was indebted chiefly to her gastronomic genius for the quickness with which she recovered her trade and credit after Napoleon's fall.

At a moment when her industries had been exhausted by fiscal exactions, and when successive wars had reduced her to bankruptcy and decimated her people, the treaty of 1815 imposed upon France some fifteen hundred millions of new debt, one-half of which she was required to pay within three years. How came it, the epicure asks, that she did not perish in a vain attempt to satisfy such extortions? How that, instead of folding her hands in despair, she applied herself to the accomplishment of the apparently impossible task? Ay more, how came it that her recuperative efforts were not more heroic than successful? What power came to her aid? what divinity accomplished the miracle? History answers—La Gourmandise!

To retrieve the disasters of bloody fields, France fell back upon her kitchens. Her soldiers had perished, but, thanks to Heaven! her cooks remained. Betrayed by her generals and destiny, France was saved by the chefs and cuisine of her capital. The allied armies had no sooner entered Paris, than these marvellous artistes—men whom no disaster could crush, no reverse plunge into despair—conspired to fascinate the hostile leaders, and through them to enslave the world by an irresistible cookery. Inspired with this sublime purpose, they ran to their pots and pans with a divine enthusiasm. By day they faced joyfully the hottest fires—by night they racked their brains for new ideas, or followed up trains of thought ending in novel combinations. Not a fortnight passed ere they saw that the enemy had been given into their hands. Everywhere the soldiers of the barbaric hordes were seen to eat intently, greedily, incessantly, the dainties offered to their insatiable mouths. Whilst marshals and generals fed luxuriously and interminably in the salons of extortionate restaurateurs, colonels and subalterns consumed the scarcely inferior “plats” of elegant though cheaper *traiteurs*. The foreign soldiers who could not pay the charges of the more fashionable caterers, stuffed themselves from dawn to twilight with the viands afforded by ordinary hotel-keepers and pastrycooks.

At the same time, non-commissioned officers gorged themselves in the open streets. "Behold," the conspirators exclaimed, "they are under the charm. Daily they pay us more than we are charged daily for their maintenance. And till the grave covers these intruders, they will pay us prodigious tribute for the gratification of tastes acquired during their sojourn amongst us." It was the hour for gastronomic enterprise and speculators. Véry became a millionaire; Achard was on the way to prodigious opulence; Madame Sully, of the Palais Royal, was selling daily twelve thousand little pâtes over the counter of her small shop, scarcely twelve feet square.

The results of this gastronomic victory exceeded even the hopes of the victors. The prosperity of the *traiteurs* at once affected the several industries that are subservient directly or indirectly to "gourmandise." Yet further, whilst inspiring the French with a cheering confidence of their ability to conquer their many difficulties, it produced a universal revival of the luxurious and elegant arts. Delicate feeding creates a disposition for every kind of costly enjoyment. In the general resuscitation of her commerce and industries, France paid the seven hundred and fifty millions of indemnity in three years, and met her other obligations with admirable punctuality. In the course of time she was abun-

dantly compensated for the exactions of the conquerors by the growing demand for her cookery and wines. Men who had learnt to appreciate the works of her *traiteurs* during "the occupation," returned to Paris at least once in every few years, to renew their acquaintance with M. Achard, and to lunch in Madame Sully's shop. These *gourmets*, in their visits to the French capital, were often accompanied by wives and daughters, who enriched the jewellers and milliners of the boulevards. M. Moët, of Epernay, drew a long face when an invading army emptied his cellars of six hundred thousand bottles of wine; but he lived to congratulate himself on a loss that made champagne the favourite drink of the wealthier people of the northern nations, and immediately doubled the number of his English customers.

Whilst France was thus replacing herself amongst the first European powers, she had a Sovereign suited to her gastronomic genius, and worthy of his descent from such epicures as Louis the Well-Beloved and Louis the God-given. If *la Gourmandise* had marked him as her most devoted worshipper, by the sensuous character of his countenance and the vastness of his indolent body, he bore the inconvenient distinctions with placidity, and regarded their burden as no excessive penalty for enjoyments that had reconciled him to exile, whilst

preparing him to govern a nation of cooks. Like his brother, Louis the Sixteenth, he astounded spectators by the magnitude of his meals ; but in every other gastronomic respect he differed remarkably from Marie Antoinette's husband.

Whatever his failings, it cannot be denied that Louis the Desired was a superb and most enlightened gourmand. Regarding cookery as one of the fine arts, and proclaiming it more honourable because more fruitful of enjoyment than astronomy, he was studious of delicacy and refinement in all his culinary enterprises. It was a first article of his creed that, whilst delighting the palate, every dish should also charm the eye and gratify the nerves of smell. The ornamentation of tables was a subject that engaged much of his serious attention. He was also a great discoverer. A daring experimentalist, he is one of the few royal epicures who enlarged the boundaries of human feeding, and added to the number of our alimentary sensations. Such a man could not fail to reflect with shame and abhorrence on the gastronomic depravity of his brother, who preferred pork to all other viands. He was not without grounds for thinking that Louis the Sixteenth's downfall and ignominious death were chiefly due to the popular disdain for his gross gluttony. It is certain that the degraded Bourbon roused no sentiment in his favour by gorging himself with

roast pullets on the 10th of August, whilst the Convention was considering his appeal for protection. Camille Desmoulins taught the Parisian populace to believe that the royal fugitive would have escaped from France had he not tarried on the way to the frontier to feast on pig's feet. The mob that shrieked around the scaffold, whilst the desperate glutton and coward screamed for mercy and struggled with his executioners, were aware that his most strenuous complaints of his treatment in the Temple related to the restrictions of his diet.

In palliation of Louis the Sixteenth's gluttony, it may, however, be pleaded that it was an hereditary disease, and would probably have escaped universal opprobrium had it not been divorced from the "friandise," in which the French Bourbons were rarely deficient. Louis the Well-Beloved, whom Grimod de la Reynière extols as a *gourmet* of a truly royal type, was also a prodigious *gourmand*. The same may also be said of Louis the Fourteenth, whom Dr. Doran characterises as "a very gifted feeder." The Duchess of Orleans testifies in her Memoirs that she "often saw him eat four platefuls of soups, a whole pheasant, a partridge, a plateful of salad, mutton hashed with garlic, two good-sized slices of ham, a dish of pastry, and afterwards fruit and sweetmeats."

But Louis the Great, in the fullness of his vigour, was a child at eating in comparison with the Swiss porter who fed daily at the servants' board of Marshal Villars.

"How many sirloins of beef could you eat at one sitting?" the Marshal inquired of this voracious janitor.

"Sirloins of beef!" the giant answered. "Ah, my Lord, not many—five or six at the utmost."

"And how many legs of mutton? Think, and tell the truth."

The porter declared that seven or eight large legs would satisfy his sharpest hunger.

"And how many pullets?"

The porter did not care much for pullets; a dozen were as many as he should ever wish to eat at a single meal.

"Good; and how about pigeons?"

A disdainful smile stole over the glutton's face as he replied contemptuously, "Pooh! Pigeons, pigeons! Pooh! my Lord! Forty or fifty—say fifty, if they are plump and well-dressed."

"Fifty pigeons!" rejoined the Marshal; "then you would need two or three hundred larks?"

"Larks, my Lord!" exclaimed the porter, with sudden enthusiasm. "How many larks? Oh, my Lord, I could eat larks *for ever*."

This porter would have felt it a privilege to serve

M. de Semblaçay, the Bishop of Bourges, who, for six years, ate six heavy meals a day, and yet never rose from table without appetite for another course. No less pious than gluttonous, this exemplary prelate observed to a familiar friend, "I attribute my felicitous gift of eating to my care to say grace, not only before and after each repast, but at each removal of a service." Whether the poet was equally abounding in thanks to Heaven biography omits to state, whilst recording that Alexander Lainez could enjoy a feast lasting for five or six hours, and five minutes after its last service be ready for another. "When will dinner be ready?" he once asked his servant immediately after a hearty repast. On hearing that he had just dined at unusual length, he answered sadly and thoughtfully, "Indeed, indeed; is my stomach losing its memory?" Another eminent and eccentric glutton, whose achievements are recorded in the archives of the Academy of Wirtemberg, made a handsome income for many years by eating in public. On one occasion this droll gentleman, or "ogre," as his biographers prefer to style him, amused himself by devouring a lacquered iron standish, several quill pens, and knife, seasoned to his taste with ink and sand. Having taken down these trifles, he topped up with two bushels of cherries with their stalks and stones. Nothing more astound-

ing than this exploit can be found in Mason Good's curious examples of morbid appetite, though he mentions the case of the servant-girl who made a light luncheon off a broom-stick. By the way, there still lives an American poet who diets on shavings and whittlings of wood, when his mind is delivering itself of its nobler conceptions. On one occasion, entering the study of a London friend during its owner's absence, this Transatlantic genius seated himself on an "occasional chair," with his face to its back, and taking out his whittling-knife regaled himself with the top rail. The refection having only sharpened his appetite, he was beginning to eat another stave of polished birch, when the proprietor of the damaged seat appeared upon the scene. With excellent good-humour and politeness the host observed to his visitor, "My dear fellow, why have you refreshed yourself with such hard and indigestible fare when that sofa-pillow, stuffed with the softest of feathers, was quite at your service?"

Before it became the fashion at feasts to forewarn every guest, by a menu put near his plate, of the several provisions for his gastronomic contentment, the epicure was exposed to difficulties only to be imagined at the present day. If he partook freely of a favourite dish at the beginning, he might deprive himself of the ability to enjoy yet more delicious fare at a later stage of the proceedings. On

the other hand, if he used his first opportunity with moderation, he might have reason to regret his abstinence on finding nothing so acceptable to his palate in the subsequent services. When the Duke of Norfolk rested on his “arms” at the table of the Sublime Steaks during one of the earlier services, he knew that the super-delicious cut from the very middle of the rump, for which he was “holding back,” would in due course make its appearance. But before the introduction of “menus,” the epicure at a friend’s table could seldom adopt the retentive policy with perfect confidence that it would prove to his advantage.

Under these circumstances arose the malicious practice of withholding the choicest viands till the too eager *gourmand* had eaten to the extreme limits of his capacity. Greedy parasites were often punished in this cruel manner by the host, who suspected them of preferring his dinners to his *jeux-d'esprit*.

Brillat-Savarin tells a story of the Chevalier de Langeac, a *bon-vivant* well known in 1780 at the best tables in Lyons, who was thus “victimized” by a wealthy banker of that city. Having conceived resentment against the Chevalier, this financier invited him to his table for dinner on a rather distant day. Inferring from the “length” of the “notice” that he was asked to a feast of

unusual ceremony and excellence, the Chevalier accepted the invitation gladly and appeared at the appointed hour. The company was numerous and brilliant, though the repast, or rather the earlier part of it, was more solid and less delicate than the Chevalier had hoped to find it. An enormous sirloin, a fricassee of pullets, and a stuffed carp constituted the first service. The second course consisted of a prodigious turkey, a pike, and six entremets. It was remarkable that the guests, with the single exception of the Chevalier, were out of appetite. This one had a sick headache, another had a chill, a third had already dined. They could pick a little; but could not eat vigorously. Accepting their excuses in good faith and comical simplicity, the Chevalier de Langeac—despite his secret dissatisfaction with the repast—threw himself on the massive dishes, and even surpassed himself in gluttony. Enjoying the infirmity of his comrades, he rallied them insolently on their incompetence. Poor imbecile! their revenge and his humiliation were at hand. As he ate they exchanged glances. At length he desisted from his assaults on the too substantial food, when he felt that he had scarcely “a corner” left in his system for a small piece of cheese at dessert. The time for his disgrace had arrived. On the removal of the second course, what was his surprise at seeing

the table relaid with fresh plate and linen? What his dismay at beholding it adorned with such delicacies as “riz de veau au coulis d'écrevisses,” “des laitances aux truffes,” “un brochet piqué et farci,” and “des ailes de bartarelles à la purée de champignons?” What his rage at hearing the invalids declare themselves quite well again? The sufferer from “migraine” was never better. The man who complained of a chill was glowing with animation. The conspirator who had already dined was congratulating himself on having taken scarcely anything since early breakfast. For a few minutes the victim made a ghastly effort to maintain an appearance of hilarity, but the shame and ridicule of his position were not to be endured with an affectation of pleasure. On the appearance of a noble dish of snipes, he rose, his face livid and his hands trembling with rage. “Monsieur,” he exclaimed to the banker, ere he rushed from the room, “you have exposed me to your friends, and you shall atone for your perfidy with your life.”

A miserably weak version of this piquant but rather disagreeable story is given by the author of “Apician Morsels,” (1829), who makes two English ladies perpetrate the inhospitable joke on a greedy curate, who, after feeding himself to repletion with corned beef and carrots, is constrained to witness their deliberate enjoyment of a

second banquet of "delicate entrées and beautiful game."

A third version of Brillat-Savarin's "holding back" story exhibits Pope, the actor, as the sufferer from the plot. At the invitation of an old comrade who had invited him to his table to dine in a homely way off "a small turbot and a boiled edge-bone of beef," the actor played the part assigned him in the programme with his accustomed zeal and thoroughness. When the "edge-bone of beef" returned to the kitchen, not a trace remained to the joint of its original proportions, for though he loved venison more, Pope loved the homelier viand much. Two minutes later the glutted actor rested his eyes on a superb haunch of venison. It was hard for him to see such fare, and know that he could not eat a single slice of it. It was still harder to feel himself the object of a cruel and clumsy insult. He could not control his emotion. "A friend of twenty years' standing," he ejaculated hysterically, as tears rolled down his cheeks, "a friend of twenty years standing and to be treated in this manner!"

At present, when we wish to be rid of an old acquaintance we cease to ask him to dinner, instead of inviting him with a view to put an elaborate affront upon him. The mediævalists, by the way, had some equally curious and barbarous modes of dismissing offensive trenchermen. Baptista Porta

gives six different processes for “driving parasites and flatterers from great men’s tables.” The *first* was to induce the unwelcome guest to wipe his wet face and hands with a napkin artfully prepared with powdered vitriol and galls, so that it “made his face and hands as black as a cole.” The *second* was to give him three hours before dinner a cup of wine, medicated with bella-donna, *i.e.*, to poison him slightly, so that on sitting down to the feast his attempts to masticate would occasion the agonising spasms of incipient lock-jaw. Porta affirms from experience that it is a mere popular error to suppose that a greedy parasite can be deprived of his appetite by merely placing under his trencher “a needle that hath often sowed the winding sheet of the dead.” The *third* process for discomforting the intrusive trencherman was to powder his meats with powdered root of wake-robbin, which would not fail to “bite his mouth,” “skin his tongue,” and compel him to gape in a highly ludicrous manner. The same result could be obtained by giving “the enemy” a salad, containing leaves of cuckowpint cut small. The *fourth* method was to smear his knife and napkin with colocynth, so as to impart “a filthy and abominable taste to whatever he ate.” Or by the *fifth* process, a host might humiliate an odious visitor by anointing his cup with a mucilage of milk of figs and gum-tragacanth which

would cause the vessel to stick to the wretch's lips. "When he hath done drinking," says this professor of the Art of Tormenting one's Guests, "he shall hardly be able to pull the cup off." The *sixth* and last process was to give a repulsive and verminous appearance to the viands set before the object of insult, by sprinkling them with powder of dried horse's blood and small pieces of cat-gut. "If you cut harp-strings small," says the Neapolitan Magician, "and strew them on hot flesh, the heat will twist them and they will move like worms."

Respecting the cost of dinners amongst the old English there is an unfortunate absence of information. But during the last two hundred years the prices of barely sufficient dinners, good dinners, and luxurious dinners have not increased greatly in London. From one of the Harleian tracts it appears that a curate, or poor scholar, in Charles the First's London paid fourpence for a dinner of meat and bread, and a farthing for attendance—charges nearly, if not precisely, equivalent to the price which a gentleman of narrow means pays for a small steak and potatoe at a cheap, though decent, dining-room of the Victorian town. At Whitehall, under Mistress Elizabeth Cromwell's frugal *régime*, the gentlemen (on board wages) at the steward's table were allowed ten shillings for every mess of ten persons, together with a bottle of sack and two bottles of claret for

the ten messmates, who certainly had no superfluous drink when, as was often the case, they had guests at table. In the days of William the Third and his successor, Anne, the highest prices for dinners at Pontack's and Brand's rarely exceeded two guineas, equal to six or seven guineas of current money. Misson (Ozell's edition) says :—“Those who would dine at one or two guineas per head are handsomely accommodated at our famous Pontack's.” A writer in the “Monthly Review” (May, 1737) says that a party of seven gentlemen had recently paid £81 11s. 6d. for their dinner at an expensive hotel, without taking in account the value of their turtle, which was a present. Dr. Doran says of this exorbitant bill, “A party of the same number at the Clarendon, and with turtle charged in the bill, would, in our days, find exceeding difficulty in spending more than £5 each.” Perhaps the most sumptuous dinner ever served at the Clarendon was the one given to Lord Chesterfield, on his retirement from the office of Master of the Buck-hounds. Count d'Orsay ordered the dinner, which (says the author of the “Art of Dining”) was laid for thirty at a cost of six guineas a head. Mr. Hayward also mentions a tradition that an Albion (Aldersgate Street) dinner, given under the auspices of Sir William Curtis, cost the party between thirty and forty pounds apiece. To account for such a

waste of money it should be remarked that the dinner-committee “despatched a special messenger to Westphalia to choose a ham,” a fact strikingly illustrative of their determination to throw away as much money as possible on a single meal. The same bootless prodigality distinguished the famous competition-dinners of the Albion (London) and York House (Bath), which resulted in a drawn bet, because the former hotel, having come off victorious in the first, was adjudged to have been beaten in the second course. “Lord Southampton,” says Mr. Haywood, “once gave a dinner at the Albion, at ten guineas a-head; and the ordinary price for the best dinner at this house (including wine) is three guineas. In our opinion extravagance adds nothing to real enjoyment; and a first-rate English dinner (exclusive of wine) ought to be furnished for a third of the price.” Grimod de la Reynière used to declare that for twenty francs he could buy at a Parisian restaurant of the highest class, a better dinner than Lucullus ever set before a friend in the salon of Apollo.

CHAPTER XVI.

COOKS AND THEIR NATURES.

"It is a curious fact that almost all the great artists in this line are erratic, restless, and inconstant. They seldom stay with the same employer, be he as liberal, indulgent, and discriminating as he may. Is it that they sigh like the Macedonian for new worlds to conquer?"—*Vide "THE ART OF DINING."*

"Si les gages d'un cuisinier, et surtout les habitudes de l'artiste vous le rendent trop dispendieux, bornez-vous au *cordon-bleu*. Faites choix d'une cuisinière active, propre."—**NOUVEAU ALMANACH DES GOURMANDS.**

SPEAKING of cooks in the "*Manuel des Amphitryons*," Grimod de la Reynière observes compassionately, that we enjoy the result of their toils without considering the cost of the ineffable enjoyments they procure for us, and without reflecting that they only derive, from their incessant exertions, impaired health and means of subsistence that are often precarious and almost always moderate. "They spend their best days," he says, "in heat and obscurity, and their last in poverty too often bordering on destitution." The pitiful epicure could only hope it consoled them to reflect that the author of the "*Cid*" endured a fate no less melancholy.

For centuries we have been indebted to France for the majority of our best cooks. The Anglo-Norman epicures employed Saxon serfs in kitchen drudgery, but their chefs were Frenchmen or Italians. The same practice prevailed amongst our nobility when the victorious and vanquished races had become one people. Harrison speaks of the "musicall-headed Frenchmen and strangers" who rendered culinary service to the English lords of Elizabethan time. Of the forty-five chefs mentioned by Mr. Hayward for having achieved eminence in this country during the present century, only five are English, whilst the other forty are French.

In our Catholic period, artistes of Italian birth, who came hither in the train of Roman ecclesiastics, formed a considerable minority of the foreign cooks retained in the establishments of our religious magnates, and in houses that affected the humours and tastes of the mitred hierarchy. But on our rupture with Rome the southerners returned to their native land, and for generations their cookery was denounced by our ancestors with equal violence and ignorance. The genius of cookery, as we have before observed, moves from the south northwards. Our Norman cookery was taken from ancient Rome. And before France took the lead in culinary science

in the sixteenth century, her noble *gourmets* got their chefs from the boot of Europe.

Montaigne's cook, who figures so drolly in one of the scholar's essays, was a native of Italy, and had served in Cardinal Caraffa's kitchen before entering the French seigneur's household. Like the chefs of ancient Rome whose affectations diverted Juvenal and Terence, this artiste was grandly eloquent about the dignity of his vocation, and would discourse for hours together on the mysteries of his art. "He made," says the essayist, who never checked his servant's loquacity with an inopportune smile, "a learned distinction of the several sorts of appetite, of that which a man has before he begins to eat, and of those after the second and third service; the means simply to satisfy the first, and then raise and quicken the other two; the ordering of sauces, first in general, and then proceeded to the qualities of the several ingredients and their effects; the difference of salads according to their seasons; which of them ought to be served hot and which cold; the manner of their garnishment and decoration; after which he entered upon the order of the whole service." Continuing a description not more true of the particular cook than of Carème, Ude, Grimod, Dumas, and all the culinary professors and amateurs who have in later times enlightened the world on their special subject,

Montaigne adds, "And all this was set out with lofty and magnificent words, the very same we make use of when we discourse of the government of an empire."

In magniloquence of this kind, Ude equalled the most florid of the old writers on cookery, and has not been surpassed by any other later scribe. He maintained that to compose an oratorio or opera was an easier feat than to invent a new entrée, and that a man of the requisite natural endowments could sooner qualify himself to compete with the Royal Academicians than with the chief operators in cookery. "I shall," he observes, "demonstrate the difficulty of the art by some observations on other arts. Music, painting, and *mechanics in general* possess professors under twenty years of age, whereas in the first line of cooking pre-eminence never occurs under thirty. We see daily at the concerts and academies young men and women who display the greatest abilities; but in our line, nothing but the most consummate experience can elevate a man to the rank of Chief-Professor." Prescriptions are dispensed by weight and measure, but dishes owe their virtue to sympathy, tact, nervous sensibility, and momentary inspirations. "The pharmacist," remarks Louis Eustache, "is obliged to weigh every ingredient that he employs, as he does not like to taste it;

the cook, on the contrary, must taste often, as the reduction increases the flavour. It would be blind work, indeed, without tasting; the very best soups in which you have omitted to put salt, are entirely without flavour; *seasoning is in cookery what chords are in music*; the best instrument in the hands of the best professor, without its being in tune, is insipid.” Speaking of Gonthier d’Andernach, whom he designates “the Father of Cookery in France,” and “a star which shone in the Reformation,” Ude exclaims with emotion, “What Bacon was to philosophy, Dante and Petrarch to poetry, Michael Angelo and Raphael to painting, Columbus and Gama to geography, Copernicus and Galileo to astronomy, Gonthier was in France to the art of cookery. Gonthier appeared to raise the culinary edifice, as Descartes, a century after him, raised that of philosophy. Both introduced doubt—the one in the moral, the other in the political world.” Ude, by the way, was the first gastronomic writer to define clearly and distinctively the terms “entrée” and “entremet.” It was usual for authors to use these very different words loosely, as though they were nearly, if not altogether, synonymous; till Ude declared authoritatively that whilst the former described “any dish of meat, fowl, game, or fish, dressed and cooked for the first course,” the latter was applicable to “all vegetable dishes, jellies,

pastries, salads, prawns, lobsters, and in general to everything that appears in the second course, except the roast." To Ude's honour, also, be it remembered that he was the reformer who substituted the light buffet-supper of sandwiches and sweets at fashionable routs, for the heavier and less accessible repast hitherto served on tables to such of the guests as could approach them. The artiste carried this important reform whilst he was in the Earl of Sefton's service; and he was chiefly moved to effect it by chivalric regard for the ladies, who often went without supper rather than expose their toilettes to disarrangement and injury in a struggle for seats.

Cooks may be managed in various ways. They may be flogged, flouted, physicked, fed, or flattered. The floggings may be given with whip or tongue—with the whip in lands where patriarchal government prevails from the court to the cabin; with the tongue in communities whose high civilization forbids the master to correct his servants with corporal punishment. In ancient Rome the cook guilty of serving a flavourless soup or insipid patina was usually warmed with the scutica, or torn with the "flagellum;" the punishment being sometimes inflicted in the presence of the injured and resentful feasters. The same discipline prevailed throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, and lingers even yet

amongst its ruder peoples. In Russia, where no one but the Czar is, in theory, altogether exempt from the lash, cooks are occasionally beaten for indolence or remissness. A staggering, though not discredited, writer asserts that it is not unusual in Poland for a gentleman of the old school to avenge himself for a bad dinner by beating his chef, who no sooner escapes from the scene of punishment than he makes all his subordinates participate in his disgrace by drubbing them soundly. But the English gourmand, unless he lives in a West Indian colony, cannot relieve his anger and correct culinary vices in this primitive fashion. The tongue is the only instrument with which he can lawfully flagellate his cook for the most heinous delinquencies.

And his interest, no less than his dignity, counsels him to refrain from angry expostulations with faulty ministrants who are seldom improved by scornful or vehement words. Just as gentlemen prefer to sell badly-trained horses rather than suffer the pain and humiliation of flogging them, the self-respecting master, instead of scolding him, dismisses the servant who tries his temper. It is far better to physic than to flout such defaulters. Dr. Kitchener was a strong advocate of the medical discipline mentioned in an earlier Chapter. "If," says the Doctor, "you find your cook neglect his business, and that his ragouts are too highly spiced and salted, and his

cookery has too much of the ‘haut goût,’ you may be sure that his Index of Taste wants regulating,—his palate has lost its sensibility, and it is high time to call in the assistance of the apothecary.”

Even in countries where law and sentiment countenance its use, harshness never succeeds with a chef of natural ability. Always nervous and highly sensitive, and often morbidly vain, he is depraved by unkindness, but may be stimulated to incredible exertions, and even rendered consistently virtuous, by discreet administrations of eulogy and *very* lenient censure. His trivial shortcomings, when infrequent, should be overlooked; his grave faults should be treated as his misfortunes rather than as sins, and should be brought under his consideration with the delicacy that qualifies the expostulations of friendship, and with the tenderness of parental admonishment. On the other hand, whilst receiving proper acknowledgments of his ordinary endeavours, he should from time to time be praised cordially, even rapturously for exceptional efforts. It is far better to flatter him egregiously than to let him imagine himself the victim of indifference. The Duke of Wellington could never keep his chief cooks because of his want of special discernment and sympathy. Felix was not the only chef who was successively pained, piqued, exasperated, and driven from Apsley House by its master’s coldness.

"My Lord," Felix exclaimed one morning to Lord Seaford after seeking an interview with that genial patron of gastronomy, "I have left Apsley House. I could bear it no longer. Take me again into your service, my Lord. I want no salary. My only desire is to serve you once more."

"My poor fellow," Lord Seaford returned, "dry your eyes and tell me all about it. What is the matter? Has the Duke been finding fault?"

"Oh no, my Lord," Felix exclaimed passionately; "I would have stayed with him if he had honoured me with a reproof. But he takes no notice of me. He passes over me, as if I were a door-mat. I serve him a dinner that would make Ude or Francatelli burst with envy, *and he says nothing*. I serve him with a poor dinner, dressed, and badly dressed, by a maid-cook, *and he says nothing*. If he were a hundred times a hero I could not serve such a master and preserve my powers. My body might live, but my genius would die." It is needless to add that Lord Seaford granted Felix his desire.

Instead of driving them to despair by his coldness, the Duke of Beaufort seized every opportunity to compliment his chefs. One of his subtle flatteries was to invite them to communicate their ideas to him as soon as they had conceived them. His Grace was roused one night from his first slumber by a knock at his bedroom door, and, on

asking quickly what was the matter, learnt that his untimely visitor was his favourite Neapolitan confectioner.

"It is only I, Signor Duc," said the artiste; "I was at the Opera, and I have been dreaming of the music—Donizetti's music—and I have an idea for a new sorbet. I have named my invention after the composer, and I announce it to your Grace."

"Excellent, my friend," rejoined the patron, "I congratulate you heartily. And now, leave me to dream of your sorbet."

The Prince Regent, at all times a master of the art of complaisance, overflowed with courtesy to his cooks. "My dear Carème," he once said to the famous Frenchman, "your dinner yesterday was superb. Everything you gave me was delicious; but you will make me die of indigestion." The compliment was perfect, far more acceptable to the chef's vanity than any speech that made no reference to the indigestibility of some of the cook's productions. No flatterer could go further than to declare himself powerless to abstain from meats which he knew would eventually kill him. "Mon Prince," returned Carème, bowing low, "my duty is to flatter your appetite, not to control it." But even the complaisance of the finest gentleman of Europe could not reconcile Carème to our grey skies and foggy atmosphere, which covered him with melan-

reign, “shall be my first cook, because he makes excellent Rhenish soup.” Such advancement could not fail to make the favourite a mark for jealousy and kitchen intrigue. A conspiracy was formed to discredit him with his patron. If the King grumbled at entrée or entremet, he was sure to be informed by a lacquey in attendance that Weston had prepared the faulty dish. “Strange,” said the King, who suspected the plot, “that Weston is always de gulbrit; henzford my googs shall mark deir dishes here as dey do in Hanover.” The reform had the anticipated result. From the date of the change Weston was safe. If he produced his “failures,” he at least escaped reproof. For the King was never heard to depreciate a performance which the *carte* assigned to his protégé.

In one of the most diverting passages of his “Table Traits,” Dr. Doran has shown how large a proportion of the noble celebrities of Louis the Fourteenth’s and Louis the Fifteenth’s courts are commemorated in the names of culinary dainties dedicated to them by successive inventors. Queens of virtue and duchesses without virtue, famous generals and frivolous chamberlains figure in this list of gastronomic notabilities, which opens with the Marquis de Béchamel, the “rich financier” and “great epicure,” whose cream-sauce for turbot and cod has been extolled with grandiloquence by a

score historians of the table, including De la Reynière and Ude. By-the-way, the last-named author expresses his surprise that so few of the gastronomic leaders of England have been honoured thus fitly with culinary dedications, which were no less fashionable in ancient Rome than modern Paris. In this matter the French chefs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were mere imitators of the Apician artistes who, as the “*De Opsonis*” testifies, used to name their finest performances after such persons as Varro, Julius Matius, Julius Fronto, Celsinius, Vitellius, Commodus, Didius Julianus, and Elagabalus.

Chefs are divisible into two classes, the prodigal, who scornfully decline to trouble themselves with questions of expense; and the economical, who delight in producing grand results with modest materials. Soyer, who wrote a cookery-book for the million whilst controlling the kitchen of a West End club, may be regarded as a type of the ingenious and condescending artistes who, representing the culinary ideas and principles of the nineteenth century, were unknown in previous times. Of the older and far more numerous class—who, indeed, constituted the entire order of chefs before the dawn of political science and the birth of utilitarian thought—Bertrand may be taken as a brilliant example. Whilst holding office in the household of

the Prince de Soubise, famous to this day for his "côtelettes," Bertrand was required to exhibit to the Prince his scheme of operations for a supper. "Merciful heavens!" exclaimed the Prince at the first item of his cook's list of requisitions, "what can you want with fifty hams for a single supper? I am not going to feast a regiment of soldiers?"

"True, my Prince," was the answer, uttered with delightful sang-froid, "and only one ham will appear on the table; but I shall require the other forty-nine for my gravies, for my decorations, for my——"

"Bertrand," the Prince interposed sharply, "you are robbing me, and this preposterous demand is disallowed."

Controlling, with a great effort, his indignation at such unprincely niggardliness, Bertrand answered lightly, "Ah, monseigneur, you know little of my resources. Bid me do so, and I will put all those fifty hams into a crystal bottle no larger than your thumb."

What could be urged in reply? Of course the Prince ceased to object, and Bertrand had his way.

Many a writer has reproduced Madame de Sévigny's account of Vatel's heroic death. But the story may be repeated again. Indeed, it cannot be told too often. For several years the chef of the Prince de Condé, Vatel was endowed with honour

even more sensitive than his palate. The King was Condé's guest, and Vatel was making strenuous exertions to maintain his master's reputation, when a series of misadventures closed in a dismal though ennobling tragedy. The number of the company greatly exceeding the Prince's expectations, the arrangements at the first dinner were defective. Some of the inferior tables had no roast, a fact that distressed Vatel immensely, causing him to exclaim repeatedly, "I am dishonoured; this is a disgrace that I cannot endure." At night the rain occasioned a failure of the fire-works, on which 16,000 francs had been expended—a misfortune that troubled the chef, although it was no affair of his special department. Everything to his excited brain seemed to be going wrong. On the following morning, though Vatel had despatched messengers to half-a-score sea-ports for *materiel*, it appeared that no adequate supply of sea-fish would arrive in time for dinner. "Is that all?" Vatel inquired despairingly of an inferior purveyor whom he had, in his agitation, mistaken for the chief fish-caterer. Unaware that supplies of fish were coming from several quarters, the man answered gloomily, "Yes, I could get no more." The cruel answer was more than Vatel could endure. Hastening from the giver of the agonising intelligence, Vatel encountered De Gourville, to whom he remarked, "Monsieur, I

shall never survive this disgrace." Five minutes later the chef was lying in his private room dead, from three wounds which he had given himself in the region of the heart. Fixing his sword in the door of his chamber, he had thrown himself on its point, twice without mortal effect, a third time with a desperate resolution that caused the blade to penetrate the seat of life. He had escaped that hateful thing, "a shamed life," by self-murder. The breath had scarcely left his body, when messengers arrived from all quarters with an abundance of sea-fish. Indeed, the chef's suicide was discovered by the servant who went in search of him, in order that the fish might be inspected and distributed. Those who would learn how Condé surrendered himself to despair, and the Duke shed tears on hearing the mournful incident, may consult Madame de Sévigny's epistle on the subject. At the present date, far from compassionating his end, we congratulate the cook on an event that placed him amongst heroes. Such a death was alone needed to ensure his immortality.

It is the mistake of many persons to suppose that "cordon-bleu," in its culinary sense, signifies an admirable cook of either sex. The term is applicable only to the very few female cooks who have attained to the highest degree of excellence in their art. Trained by Héliot—some of whose master-

pieces are recorded in Carème's "Parallèle de la Cuisine Ancienne et Moderne," and by other chefs of similar brilliance, to believe that culinary prowess of the first order was beyond the reach of woman-kind, Louis the Fifteenth used to speak disdainfully of women-cooks, till Madame Dubarry gave him a lesson that modified his opinion on this point, and raised her sex in his esteem. The King had eaten with unusual gust a dinner to which Madame Dubarry had invited him, when he exclaimed rapturously,

"Who is this new cuisinier of yours? Let me know his name, that he may henceforth be one of our royal household?"

The lady's triumph was complete, for the whole repast was the performance of a female artiste.

"Ah, I have caught you!" she said, laughing merrily. "It is no cuisinier, but a cuisinière, to whom your Majesty must give fit recompense. You made my negro, Zamore, Governor of Luciennes. Give my cuisinière a *cordon-bleu*."

Though the cuisinière was not raised to the Order to which her protectress thought her entitled, she acquired enduring distinction in being the first *cordon-bleu* of gastronomic story, and in winning for eminent cooks of her sex a title that still remains peculiarly their own.

More fortunate in finding a bard to preserve his

name whilst perpetuating his fame, than Madame Dubarry's "*cordon-bleu*," was Edward Heardson ("Ned" of the "Beef-Steaks,") whose virtues are commemorated in the following epitaph by Captain Charles Morris, the anacreontic songster :—

" His last steak done, his fire raked out and dead,
Dish'd for the worms himself, lies Honest Ned,
We, who partook of all his fleshly toils,
Received his bastings, too, and shared his broils,
Now in our turn a mouthful carve and trim,
And dress at Phoebus' fire our steak for him.
His heart, which well deserved a noble grave,
Was watchful, patient, modest, just, and brave,
And never did earth's wide maw a morsel gain,
Of kindlier juices or more tender grain.
His tongue, where duteous friendship humbly dwelt,
Charm'd all who heard the faithful zeal he felt.
Still, to whatever end his chops he moved,
'Twas all well seasoned, relished, and approved.
This room his heaven ! when threatening fate drew nigh, .
And death's chill shade had dimmed his lingering eye,
His fondest hopes, betrayed with many a tear,
Were that his life's last spark might glimmer here ;
And the last words that choked his parting sigh,
' Oh, at your feet, dear masters, let me die.' "

Mr. Arnold's notes to these lines record that Ned was a clever pugilist, and demonstrated his attach-
to the Sublime Steaks by causing himself, in his closing hour, to be brought into the Society's dining-room, where he drew his last breath.

CHAPTER XVII.

COOKERY BOOKS.

"The subject of cookery having been very naturally introduced at a table where Johnson, who boasted of the niceness of his palate, owned that 'he always found a good dinner,' he said, 'I could write a better book of cookery than has ever been written; it should be a book on philosophical principles. Pharmacy is now made much more simple. Cookery could be made so too. . . . Women can spin very well; but they cannot make a good book of cookery.'"—BOSWELL'S "LIFE OF JOHNSON."

"He who conceives it is a desiderium
 To salt his mangoes and his slaterium;
 Or, still more curious, who aspires to make
 Chantilly baskets, or a Shrewsbury cake;
 Or whip his cream, his syllabub, and trifle,
 The sheets of Rundle and of Smith may rifle.
 To him the 'Housewife's Pocket-Book' I lend,
 Or the last 'Pastrycook's Assistant' send.
 If more receipts he wishes let him seek 'em
 In that great work, 'The Lady's Vademecum.'
 If 'tis a female would her sex surpass,
 I'll give, inestimable boon! my Glass."

THE BANQUET, In three Cantos. (1819.)

AT the present time the literature of the English table would fill the shelves of a large cabinet. Three centuries since the book-collector found it difficult to fill a single small shelf with culinary books known to English housewives. The "Forme of Cury," in different degrees of incompleteness,

was ready to his hand. He had half-a-dozen manuscript tracts to which reference has been made in the previous pages of this work; and he could bring together twenty or more collections of receipts gathered from imperfect copies of "The Forme" and "The Roll" of Cury. But the oldest of the printed books which the modern epicure delights to place in his library of English gastronomers came from Elizabethan presses.

Abraham Veale's "Proper New Booke of Cookery" (1575) was followed, after an interval of twenty years, by "The Good Huewives Handmaid, for Cookerie in Her Kitchin, in Dressing all Manner of Meat." That there was a general and strong demand for new cookery-books towards the close of the sixteenth century, appears from the quickness with which new collections of receipts, or new editions of old collections, followed one another from the bookstalls to the pantry during the last years of Elizabeth's reign. This was the period which gave birth to "The Widdowes' Treasure; plentifully furnished with Sundry Precious and Approved Secrets in Physicke and Chirurgery, for the Health and Pleasure of Mankind," a treatise whose culinary worth was proclaimed by the author's announcement on the title-page, "Hereunto are adjoined sundrie prittie practices and conclusions of cookerie, with many profitable and wholesome

medicines for sundry diseases in catell." The generous art was treated more respectfully in the "Good Huswife's Jewel" (1596), "wherein," says the title-page, "is to be found most excellent and rare devices for conceites in cookery, found out by the practice of Thomas Dawson. Whereunto is adjoyned sundry approved receits for many soueraine oyles, and the way to distil many precious waters, with divers approved medicines for many diseases." Cookery precedes medicine in Thomas Dawson's title-page; and though he gave the housewife seasonable instruction for the cure of human maladies, he disdained to diversify his orders for soups and pasties, with directions for the making of horse-balls. In the second part of his elegant performance (1597), Mr. Dawson is altogether silent on medical matters. But the practice of intermingling medical and culinary instruction, in literature specially addressed to matrons and housewives, prevailed for more than another century. "The Queen's Closet Opened: Incomparable Secrets in Physic, Chirurgery, Preserving and Candying," a popular manual with housewives in the later decades of the seventeenth century, was published in 1671, together with "A Queen's Delight" and "The Compleat Cook." With a doctor's sensitiveness for the honour of his profession, Sir John Hill refrained from making his hand-book of

cookery a manual of domestic medicine; but its earlier editions contained “A receipt against the Plague,” and two receipts for “the certain cure for the bite of a mad dog.” One of these preservatives against hydrophobia was long famous as Dr. Mead’s receipt. “Let the patient,” it says, “be blooded at the arm nine or ten ounces. Take the herb, called in Latin ‘lichen cinereus terrestris,’ in English, ash-coloured ground liverwort, clean, dried, and powdered, half-an-ounce. Mix these well together, and divide the powder into four doses, one of which must be taken every morning fasting, for four mornings successively, in half-a-pint of cow’s warm milk. After these four doses, the patient must go into the cold bath, or a cold spring or river every morning fasting for a month. He must be dipt all over, but not stay in (with his head above water) longer than half a minute, if the water be very cold. After this he must go in three times for a fortnight longer. N.B.—The lichen is a very common herb, and grows generally in sandy and barren soils all over England. The right time to gather it is in the months of October and November.”

The cookery books of the seventeenth century are numerous. To give the titles of all of them would be to fill a page to little purpose. The student, however, may be directed to the “Delightfull Daily Exercise for Ladies’ Gentlewomen” (1621), John

Murrell's "New Book of Cookery" (1630), "A Book of Cookery and the Order of Meats" (1650), "Archimagirus Anglo-Gallicus" (1658), by the psendo Sir Theodore Mayerne, Robert May's "Accomplisht Cook; or, the Art and Mystery of Cookery" (1660), the "Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth, commonly called Joan Cromwell" (1664), the "Closet of Sir Kenelm Digbie, Knight, Opened" (1669), Giles Rose's "Perfect Schoole of Instructions for Officers of the Mouth" (1682), the "Accomplished Ladies Delight in Preserving, Physick, Beautifying, and Cookery" (1684), the "Young Cook's Monitor" (1692), and John Evelyn's "Acetaria: a Discourse of Sallets" (1699.)

To his honour be it recorded that Lord Bacon was one of the seventeenth century writers on cookery. The philosopher who touched upon every subject of human interest, and adorned whatever he touched, gave the world some notable papers on culinary affairs in his "Natural History." Together with minute directions for making "Chicken in Beer," (the China ale of subsequent writers), and for preparing such drinks as almond milk, mint milk, rose milk, and egg wine (flip), he gives receipts for mortrews and mince-pies. "A mortress," he says, "made with the brawn of capon, stamped and strained, and mingled, after it is made with a like quantity, at the least, of almond butter, is an excel-

lent meat to nourish those that are weak, better than blankmanger, or jelly ; and so is the cullice of cocks, boiled thick with the like mixture of almond butter ; for the mortress or cullice, of itself, is more savoury and strong, and not so fit for nourishing of weak bodies, but the almonds that are not of so high a taste do excellently qualify it."

Of mince-pies he observes, " mincing of meat, as in pies and buttered mincemeat, saveth the grinding of the teeth ; and therefore, no doubt, it is more nourishing, especially in age, or to them that have weak teeth ; but the butter is not so proper for weak bodies, and therefore it were good to moisten it with a little claret wine, pill of lemon or orange, cut small, sugar, and a very little cinnamon or nutmeg. As for chuets, which are likewise minced meat, instead of butter and fat, it is good to moisten them partly with cream, or almond, pistachio milk, or barley or maize-cream ; adding a little coriander seed and caraway seed, and a very little saffron."

No reader of the foregoing pages requires to be told that the eighteenth century produced several new cookery books, and several writers who illustrated the culinary practices of former times, and delighted to record the curiosities and anomalies of *gourmandise*. In early years of that age, Queen Anne's physician, Lister, was at work on his learned edition of the " De Opsoniis" (1710) ; and in its

later years the London antiquaries paid especial attention to the cuisine of mediæval England. Pegge published his edition of "The Forme of Cury" in 1780; and Warner produced the "Antiquitates Culinariæ" in 1791. Having described the processes of the Roman kitchen with his pen, to the lively diversion and contempt of Dr. King (who, as a scholar, might have exhibited more respect for a careful student and a scholarly performance), Lister provoked his persecutor yet further by illustrating them with banquets prepared for his table in classic fashion. At a later period of the same century, Dr. Akenside, who pursued the delights of the table whilst cherishing the pleasures of the imagination, braved the ridicule of society by repeating Lister's Apician revivals. Even as the earlier physician found an ungenerous critic in the author of "The Art of Cookery," the later doctor encountered a bitter and offensive censor in Smollett, who caricatured him in "Peregrine Pickle" as the physician who gives a dinner after the manner of the ancients.

Enough has been said in a previous chapter of Mrs. Glasse's "Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy" (1745), which remained for more than half-a-century our chief authority on good cheer. Mrs. Elizabeth Cleland, who published "A New and Easy Method of Cookery" (1759), was only a

shameless pirate of Sir John Hill's performance, which she reproduced without acknowledgment and with few improvements. But though it had a considerable sale, the "New and Easy Method" did not put Mrs. Glasse's book out of credit of fashion. In spite of her several unscrupulous competitors, Mrs. Glasse was obeyed meekly, and quoted reverently, by English housewives, until after a long tenure of popularity she was superseded by Mrs. Rundle, who produced in an early year of the present century, and in a provincial town, the cookery-book which, on its publication by a fashionable London publisher, made her famous amongst women.

Mr. Grant, a gentleman who has written with equal rashness and confidence about things of earth and things of heaven, tells in his "Portraits of Public Characters," a strange and scarcely accurate story of Mrs. Rundle's intercourse with her London publisher, "The case," says our artist in portraiture, "of Mr. Murray in connection with Mrs. Rumbold's (*sic*) book of cookery has often been before the public, but considerable misconception, I believe, still exists on the subject. The facts as communicated to me by one who knew a good deal of Mr. Murray's business transactions at the time are these:—the authoress *sent the manuscript* of the work to Mr. Murray, with a request that if he thought the work worthy of publication he would

bring it out as soon as convenient. There was not only no specification of any sum for copyright, but not the slightest hint was given that anything would be expected for it in the *event of its being deemed worthy of publication.* The book was brought out and at once obtained a large sale; and Mr. Murray, acting with a generosity which is anything but common among publishers, sent the authoress a cheque for £500. Instead of appreciating the generous act, the lady, finding the work had been successful, immediately brought an action against Mr. Murray to recover the copyright. She was unsuccessful in her suit; the verdict was with the defendant. Had Mrs. *Rumbold* not dragged Mr. Murray into a court of law and sought to compel him to relinquish the copyright of the work, it is exceedingly probable, considering the continued success of the work and the publisher's proverbial liberality, that the first cheque of £500 would not have been the last. The work has had a most extraordinary sale. I believe it is now in its sixty-eighth edition, and the entire number of copies sold verges on 150,000. It is supposed that Mr. Murray must have cleared by this volume the enormous sum of £25,000."

On one point Mr. Grant is certainly wrong. The book was written by a Devonshire lady named Rundle, *not Rumbold.* Again, the gentleman who

knew so much of Mr. Murray's business, was probably in error as to the circumstances under which the work was submitted to the publisher's notice. The book was published originally at Exeter. Its third edition was published in that town in 1808; and the work had achieved a great reputation in the West of England more than twenty years before Mr. Murray in 1829 offered *his* first edition to a larger public. Knowing the history of the work, he perused it for the first time *in print*, and had no need to pass judgment on the lady's manuscript. As to the writer's expectations of profit from her labours it may be observed that she published it in Exeter, and re-published it in London with the resolution to draw no money from the venture. Mr. Murray's first edition of the "New System," by "a lady," contains the preface which appeared in the original edition, and ends with the words: "This little work would have been a treasure to herself when she first set out in life, and she therefore hopes it may be useful to others. In that idea it is given to the public, and she will receive from it no emolument, so she trusts it will escape without censure." A lady of condition, Mrs. Rundle lived in times when fortunate gentle-women made it a point of honour not to earn money.

For sixteen years from the date of its first pub-

lication in London, Mrs. Rundle's "New System" was emphatically *the* cookery-book of the English household, when it was superseded by a far better book from a lady's pen.

The daughter of a gentleman of Ipswich who had suffered from commercial misadventure, Eliza Acton was still a girl when she was known in Suffolk as the brightest and most energetic of a numerous and clever family. In 1826 she published at Ipswich, by subscription, a volume of "Poems," and then with a full sense of her literary dignity went out into the world to earn her living as a governess. Ten years later, when she had left youth behind her and was on the threshold of middle age, she called at a great publishing house in Paternoster Row, and begged to see Mr. Longman. She had her desire, and slightly startled the great publisher by saying, "Sir, I have called to ask for your advice." On being invited to explain herself, she continued, "I wish to write a book that is really wanted. Give me the subject of a book for which the world has a need, and I will write it for you."

On being asked if she was already an author, she answered resolutely, "I am a poet; but I shall write no more poems. The world does not want poems."

With a scarcely perceptible note of irony in his

civil tone, Mr. Longman said to the lady who was ready to write prose on any subject: "Well, Miss Acton, we want a good cookery-book, and if you write me a really good one I shall be happy to publish it for you."

"Then you advise me to write a cookery-book?"

"I should advise you to do so," was the cautious answer, "if I were confident of your ability to write a good one."

Years went on, during which Miss Acton, who before her visit to Paternoster Row, had given but little thought to cookery, laboured steadily and systematically in collecting the requisite materials. She wrote to cooks and clever housewives in every part of the country. Old friends in the Eastern Counties, favouring her enterprise, induced great people to tell their cooks to help. New friends in London gave her introductions to epicures from whom she gleaned excellent receipts, and learnt the names of other epicures whom she lost no time in assailing with entreaties for assistance. Ere long there was neither epicure nor chef in England who had not been addressed by Miss Acton with flattering letters or persuasive speech. The result of her exertions, carried on for many years with equal resoluteness and good temper, was the "Modern Cookery in all its Branches," published in 1845, which continues to hold its place in the esteem of

housewives, although so many capital books in the same department of useful literature have appeared during the last twenty-five years. Miss Acton had her reward. She derived from her *one* great work an adequate provision for the remainder of her life.

Whilst the number and merit of our cookery-books by English writers have been growing, we have adopted into our gastronomic literature the best Continental treatises on the art. Carème's "*Maître d'Hôtel*" influenced art scarcely less in England than in France. Even if they had not pursued their calling in this country, and written with special regard for the English public, Ude, Francatelli, and Soyer would have taken rank amongst our culinary chieftains. The "*Artistic Cookery*" of Urbain Dubois would not have been more completely a part of our literature had he been of English birth.

In another department of gastronomic literature we are largely and directly indebted to France. The works of Brillat-Savarin, De Cussy, and Grimod de la Reynière created on this side the Channel a taste for humorous essays on good living, and for anecdotes of *gourmandise*; a taste which called into existence a new class of lively and entertaining writers. Our "*Epicure's Almanack*" (1815), and Dr. Kitchener's "*Cook's Oracle*" (1827), were the direct literary offsprings of the "*Almanach des Gour-*

mands" and the "Physiologie du Goût." Had he not studied the "Manuel des Amphitryons," Dick Hamelbergius Secundus would never have given us his "Apician Morsels" (1829). The same influence is discernible in the best of Thomas Walker's gastronomic papers of "The Original" (1835), notwithstanding the simplicity of his tastes and his disdain for meretricious kickshaws. That the appetite for this diverting literature is not extinct may be inferred from the enduring popularity of such works as Mr. Hayward's "Art of Dining," Dr. Doran's "Table Traits," and Mr. Jerrold's "Epicure's Year-Books."

THE END.

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